



Window on Jordan

Stop! There's a zebra up ahead!

By a Star Staff Writer
CROSSING THE roads in Jordan is a dangerous business. You have to create clever strategies and tactics to get from one side of the road to the other. Drivers just don't care, they seem to be impatient, and in wild hurry to get to their destination regardless of the potential for accidents. Despite the fact that there are stringent driving tests, once the driver gets his license, he becomes a road hog, and is prepared to flaunt every rule in the book. It can safely be said that Jordanian drivers are an inconsiderate lot. "No rules, no ethics just drive" seems to be the motto.

Sadly, this is graphically illustrated when pedestrians try to cross the road at a zebra crossing, those black and white markings laid out across the road. They are for the safety of people, but you can bet your life that no driver will stop for you to cross at one. Most of the time, road hogs speed on, leaving the poor pedestrian to navigate his way across. One taxi driver admitted that its sheer bloody-mindedness. It isn't true to say that drivers don't see the zebra crossing, which couldn't be any more clearly marked. Drivers do see it, they just find it more convenient to ignore it.

Just to test my theory, I have stood many times at a zebra crossing, just to see if drivers would stop. One day, I thought I'd even try sauntering across a zebra crossing, like people do in other countries. No chance! One driver nearly whipped my back off. It was a neat trick. Once they see you coming, they accelerate! There you are, in the middle of the road, with cars speeding all around you, hooting at you for being an obstruction. One gentleman did have the courtesy to stop his car at the crossing, but he was probably one in a

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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AMMAN, 20-26 AUGUST 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 11, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Price of wheat falls but consumers not reaping the benefits

By Ibtisam Awadat

Star Staff Writer
THE "BREAD RIOTS" of August 1996, which followed unprecedented increases in the price of basic foodstuffs cooled down when officials promised to decrease prices as soon as international wheat prices fell. Two years on, citizens have discovered that prices have fallen on the international market and although the government had made two purchasing deals, bread is still on sale at the old high prices. Dr. Mohammad Obeidat, president of the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP), said, "The government took the international prices as a reference when it raised local prices, so when the prices fell almost by half, why was no action taken?" The price reached \$240 per ton two years ago, but now it is down to \$135-140 per ton. Consequently, instead of eight piasters per kilogram of wheat the price had tripled to 24 piasters, then it was decreased slightly to 20. Obeidat continued, "The decline in prices took place one year ago, so the government has been making a profit since that time," adding that "the price of one kilogram of bread should be around 13-14 piasters."

The second party to demand a drop in prices was the Association of Bakery Owners (ABO). "International prices have dropped because the wheat harvests were good," said Abdel Illah Al Hamawi president of the ABO. "We knew that the Ministry of Supply (MS) imported 100,000 tons of wheat at the new price of \$170 per ton." However, Hamawi emphasized that the MS did import further quantities at \$140-150 per ton. Hard Red Winter brand from the USA, though not top quality, is the wheat most consumed in Jordan, but the Australian kind is the best.

"We ask for good quality wheat to be brought to the Jordanian market," Hamawi continued "since during this summer the percentage of humidity causes loaves to get dry and crumble, which is not good for customers or the bakers." Hamawi mentioned that

some mills and restaurant owners imported their own wheat, but they discovered later that it was of poor quality, certainly not as good as the kind imported by the MS. "Some bakers boycotted these mills, preferring to buy wheat from



the MS, while others continued to deal with the mills but regretted it afterwards," Hamawi told The Star.

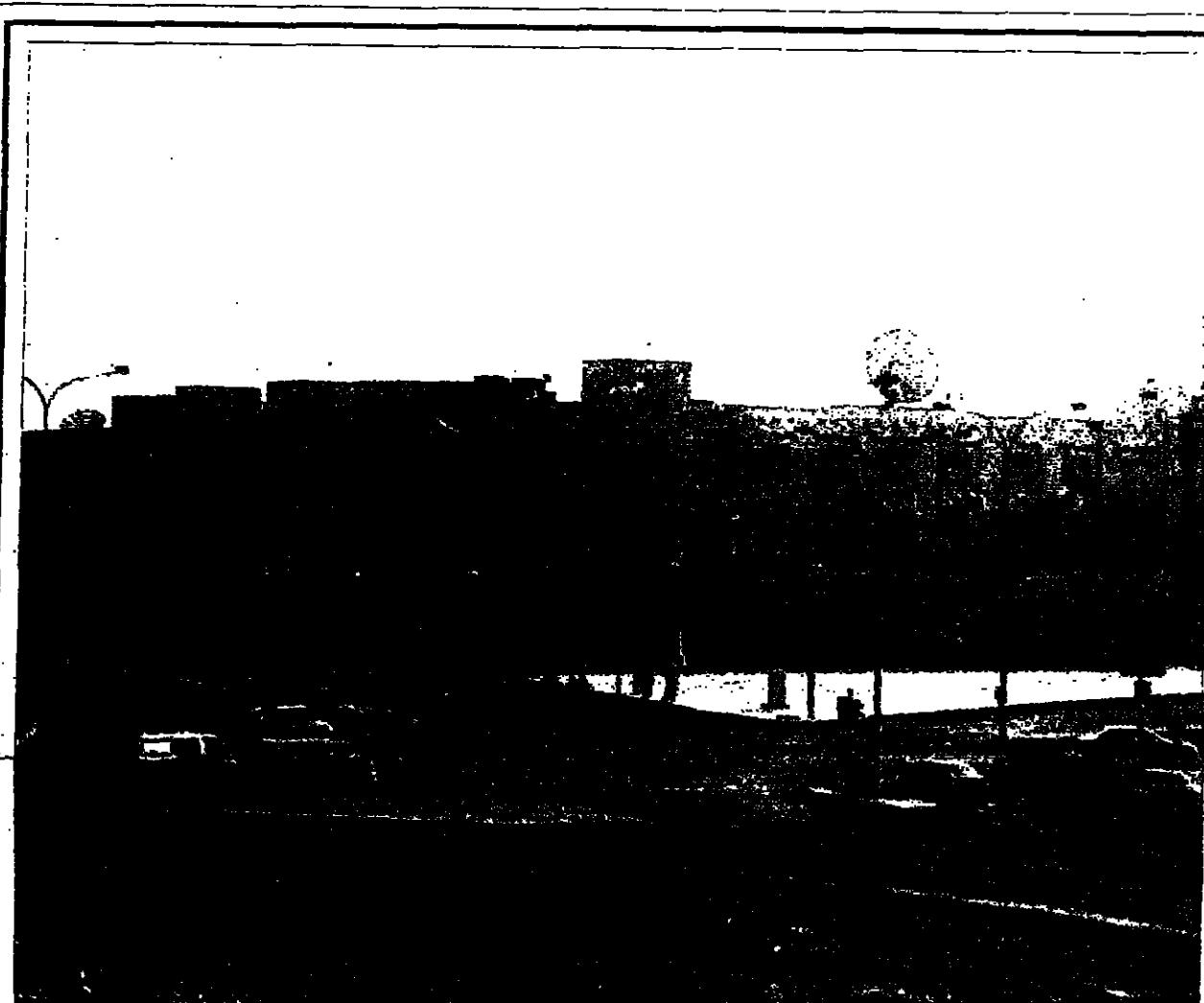
The government still hasn't made any move to decrease the price of wheat, but a statement by the Minister of Finance Sulaiman Al Hafez was issued in the daily newspapers saying

that, "decreasing the price is part of the formula, but the second factor which has to be taken in account are the subsidies, which cost the Treasury JD 82 million." His Majesty King Hussein ordered the government to devote part of the annual budget to provide cash subsidies for citizens who couldn't afford the higher prices.

Parliamentary rumors about a written memorandum submitted to the government concerning wheat and bread prices quickly spread, but Ghazi Al Fayed, Lower House deputy stated, "All we have done so far was to make a suggestion during a normal meeting with Minister of Finance, Sulaiman Hafez," adding, "I noticed a positive response from the minister since decreasing the price means stopping the subsidies of bread which will save money."

Al Fayed, also head of the Administrative Parliamentary

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A view of US Embassy in Amman during a security alert, 18 August. Guards sealed off the embassy, a high security complex resembling a fortress in the hilly outskirts of Amman, to prevent public access after it received a telephone warning, but no staff were evacuated. US embassies around the world have been on high alert since 7 August when explosions at the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed more than 250 people. Reuters

Anti-American terrorist plot described by Palestinian suspect

By Kamran Khan and Pamela Constable

KARACHI—A Palestinian suspect in the 7 August bombing of the US

Embassy in Kenya, who was detained and questioned for a week by Pakistani authorities, reportedly described to his captors an international network of terrorist and paramilitary operations against American interests abroad that have been orchestrated and financed by Osama bin Laden, the rogue Saudi millionaire and Islamic militant based in Afghanistan.

According to notes taken by Pakistani intelligence officials who questioned the man—who they identified as Mohammad Sadiq Howaida—he told them bin Laden controlled a network of 4,000 to 5,000 militants from a number of Muslim countries and had sent them to participate in armed actions abroad, including the 1993 hit-and-run attacks against US forces in Somalia. He called this operation his group's biggest triumph.

The officials, who spoke to a Washington Post correspondent in Karachi this week and shared their notes on condition of anonymity, said the suspect described bin Laden as possessing a large arsenal of surface-to-air

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New government needs more than a few new faces

By Star Staff Writer

WILL THERE, or Won't there? People have now been speculating for well over a month, but it is now fairly certain that a change of government is imminent. First, the growth rate figures bungle, then the seemingly inextricable water issue have put the government under pressure to go, or at least have a major reshuffle. There has even been talk of reducing the number of ministers, bringing in new faces, and of generally creating a government to handle these difficult issues.

Speculation maybe, but events this week indicate the likelihood of change. The letters between His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, and the consequent issuance of a

Royal Decree giving the Regent more constitutional powers, shows that a change in the government is now a distinct possibility. Prince Hassan now has the power to change the government and appoint a

News Analysis

new one. Prime Minister Dr. Abdel Salam Majali will very probably stay on because of the critical timing. As to the nature of a new cabinet, there is again a great deal of speculation but

experts are saying that up to 12 portfolios will likely change hands in the next week.

Analysts argue that any incoming government must prove itself capable of handling difficult issues. One prominent analyst, Labeeb Kamhawi, stressed that the point is not just to change the government, but to put forward a national strategy that reviews all the priorities of the state. He added that "this is essential because of the stumbling peace process."

Talk of a government reshuffle has brought other political groups to the forefront. The Islamists, for instance, who boycotted the last parliamentary elections and are against the present government reiterated their stance—they would not participate in any government as long as the 1994 Jor-

dan-Israeli peace treaty remains intact.

The Muslim Brotherhood is currently leading an opposition campaign through its political wing the Islamic Action Front (IAF) to hold a "national salvation conference" with the participation of about eight opposition parties. The Overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdel Al Majed Thumneibat, believes that "there is a need for a national program that could deal with all the country's crises—political, economic or social."

He added, "We want a government whose main concern is the people and a government which will build bridges with its Arab brothers."

George Haddad, public opinion

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Tokyo shoppers watch transfixed as US President Clinton's televised admission of his "inappropriate" relationship with Monica Lewinsky is beamed around the world. Reuters

Clinton makes public admission of relationship with Lewinsky

By Elizabeth Shogren and Ronald J. Ostrow

WASHINGTON—In a grudging public admission after seven months of denial, President Clinton told the American people he had a relationship with Monica S. Lewinsky that was "not appropriate, in fact it was wrong."

In a televised address that followed a historic day of testimony to a grand jury, Clinton also acknowledged lying to the public about his "private" conduct but steadfastly insisted that he had not asked anyone to lie or otherwise break the law.

"I misled people including even my wife. I deeply regret that," Clinton said smoothly and without flinching. "I intend to reclaim my family life for my family."

While he took "complete responsibility" for his actions, Clinton—speaking from the same White House Map Room where only hours before he had been grilled by prosecutors—also used the occasion to defiantly challenge the propriety of the investigation by independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr.

"It's nobody's business but ours," Clinton said. "Even presidents have private lives. It is time to stop the pursuit of personal destruction and the prying into private lives."

Using an assertive tone that conveyed a command from the nation's chief executive and not a request from a penitent politician, Clinton directed the country and Starr to "turn away from the spectacle of the last seven months."

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Al Urdun Street, the road to a brighter future?

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

HAVE YOU ever woken up to the sound of heavy trucks or to the drum beat of construction work. Worse still, have you ever woken up to find that the municipality wants to put a highway through the middle of your house.



Under construction

These are the problems which countless residents in Amman have had to face up to when the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) started its plans for Al Urdun Street. This is a new highway that runs from Raghdan, aimed at redistributing northbound traffic from the capital all the way to Irbid.

The whole of Amman will benefit as

the new highway will reduce congestion on the present road networks. More importantly, it should help to reduce the number of road accidents in the capital. As is often the case, the sacrifice of the few serves the welfare of the many.

Jordan suffers from one of the highest car accident rates in the world—2481 road deaths have been reported between 1993-97. This gives the country the unenviable ranking of 19th in the world for the worst road accidents. (In 1996, 33,984 road accidents were reported in Jordan).

Al Urdun Street—stretching 8.5 kilometers—will be an alternative route for people traveling from Amman to the northern regions and vice-versa. Further, it will reduce traffic on University Street, which is considered as the busiest road in the Kingdom.

"The first stage of the project has been completed," said Dr Mamdouh Al Abbadi, Amman's mayor.

Works on the highway started last year. About 2,500 meters of the highway has already been constructed. So far, the new highway links Raghdan, Wadi Al Haddadeh Tunnel, Abu Thar Al Ghafari Tunnel and the Al Istiqal Highway Tunnel. The project continues northwards, passing through Sports City, Tabarbour, and up to Abu Nsir and northwards.

However, resentment about the new highway has come from various quarters.

"We know GAM is working to serve our interests, but the diversions caused by the construction work have caused so much traffic congestion and road



Al Urdun Street

accidents," said a disgruntled taxi driver, and a frequent user of the now disrupted Al Istiqal highway.

Residents of the two Palestinian refugee camps, Al Hussein and Wadi Al Haddadeh, complained bitterly as the construction of the new highway meant the dismantling of houses. They saw the long term objective of the highway as a plan to resettle them.

However, Dr Abbadi flatly rejected such a claim, adding that "all we want to do is improve living conditions in these areas."

The construction of the road has caused many problems since the work started. "At first, they used to cut the electricity twice a week. This still happens today," said one of the residents in Al Hussein Camp. Another resident, 34-

year-old Ahmad, visiting what remains of his house, complained bitterly. "It's nothing but rubble now. This is the house where I was born, got married and raised my children." He was forced to leave his parents house and to rent an apartment at JD 80 a month—his monthly take home pay is just JD 130.

Naturally, the Municipality is keen to highlight the benefits of the project. Improvements to the surrounding infrastructure will follow—newly landscaped areas line the route, and strategically positioned traffic lights will aid the passage of vehicles.

The project, the cornerstone of which was laid by His Majesty King Hussein on the occasion of his birthday, will be completed by the end of the year.

For the Record

Tarawneh statement

AMMAN (Petra)—Chief of the Royal Court Fayez Tarawneh on Sunday said that His Majesty King Hussein has resumed medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic, following his return from Washington. In a statement to Petra, Dr Tarawneh said that His Majesty the King enjoys good health and that all the medical treatment is proceeding as planned. Dr Tarawneh said that due to the long period of time His Majesty the King might need for the treatment, His Majesty King Hussein has entrusted His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, with the power to carry out changes or amendments in the government—during the absence of His Majesty. The power to make amendments to the constitution, and for making treaties, still rests with His Majesty.

Prince Hassan Visits PSD

AMMAN (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday, visited the Public Security Dept., (PSD), where he stressed the necessity for security, and reassured all citizens that it is the first priority of the Jordanian state. Prince Hassan stressed His Majesty King Hussein's keenness to afford the best capabilities and highest training for the PSD, in order to combat crime and maintain stability and security. The Regent called on all sectors of the Jordanian state, both civil and official, to further solidify the nation's economic and social security. Prince Hassan stressed the importance of executing responsibilities in a proper manner, and for securing transparency in all actions, as well as implementing a principle of reward and punishment, which His Majesty King Hussein recently affirmed.

Regent meets Indian envoy

AMMAN (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday received General Secretary of the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for UN Affairs, Deleep Lahiri, who handed the Prince a message from Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to His Majesty King Hussein. The message called for regional dialogue on the eve of the Non-Aligned Summit in South Africa.

Delegation visits Egypt

AMMAN (Petra)—A delegation from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has ended a working visit to Egypt, during which it held talks with officials from the Egyptian Ministry of Energy on joint cooperation policies in energy related fields. During its one-week visit, the delegation met with the Egyptian Minister of Electricity and Energy Mohamed Mahir Abaza. The two sides stressed the importance of promoting and activating cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy. They also agreed on the need to exchange expertise, data and research studies, as well as the implementation of joint energy programs.

Parliamentary delegation arrives in Tehran

TEHRAN (Petra)—Lower House Speaker Sa'ed Hayel Sour and an accompanying parliamentary delegation visited Tehran last week, for a several day official visit. The visit, from an invitation by the Speaker of the Iranian Islamic Shura Council Naeq Nouri, acquired special importance, as it was the first of its kind made by a Jordanian Lower House Speaker in years, and because of its intensive agenda that included meetings with high-ranking Iranian officials. The Jordanian delegation, in addition to Mr Sour, included deputies Mansour ben Tarif, Abdel Majid Al Aqash, Asaf al-Asaf and Mahmoud Kharabsheh, was scheduled to meet Iranian president Mohammad Khatami, Speaker of the Shura Council Naeq Nouri, former President Hashemi Rafsanjani, as well as the Jordanian-Iranian Parliamentary Friendship Society. The Jordanian-Iranian talks focused on bilateral relations, as well as issues of concern to the Islamic world. The Jordanian delegation's program also included visits to a number of cultural sites. The delegation was received at Tehran airport by Mr Nouri, head of the Jordanian-Iranian parliamentary Friendship Society, a number of Iranian deputies, in addition to the Jordanian ambassador in Tehran and the Iranian ambassador in Amman.

Stop! There's a zebra up ahead!

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thousand. The rest continue to violate the driving code.

With more and more cars on our roads the situation is getting worse. Today, most pedestrians stopped attempting to use the crossings. Why bother to walk up the road to find a zebra crossing, when you can cross anywhere just as safely? ■



Anti-American terrorist plot described by Palestinian suspect

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missiles, mortars, rockets and tanks that are stored all over Afghanistan.

He said the organization operates full-time inside Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The claims by the suspect—whose true name, US officials say, is Mohammed Sa'ad Odeh—could not be substantiated.

cently verified, but much of his account is consistent with what Western intelligence agencies and media reports have said in the past about bin Laden. Odeh's detailed account appeared to strengthen suspicions by US law enforcement officials that bin Laden was involved in the attack in Nairobi and a nearly simultaneous one in Tanzania.

The notes provided little new or detailed information about the embassy bombing in Nairobi, however. According to Pakistani intelligence sources, Odeh told them he was an engineer who had been sent to Nairobi by bin Laden to provide technical and logistical support for the bombing, but that he had been instructed to leave Kenya hours before the bomb exploded, killing 247 people and wounding more than 5,000. Odeh, 34, who was detained 7 August at Karachi International Airport, was held for a week and then turned over to American and Kenyan officials, who flew him back to Nairobi for questioning.

According to FBI officials and other American government sources, Odeh has not told them or the Kenyans any of the information he allegedly confessed while in Pakistani custody. That discrepancy has raised questions about whether he made false statements under duress, or whether the Pakistani had concocted his confession to please the United States.

But this week, the Pakistani sources said they were not surprised that Odeh had failed to repeat his story once out of their hands. They said that while he was in Pakistan, he had sought to gain the sympathy of his captors, who were fellow Muslims, but that once in American or Kenyan custody, he knew he could be prosecuted and possibly sentenced to death for his crimes.

Odeh "was fully aware that his on-the-record admission of

anti-US guerrilla operations would take him to the gallows," said an official who met repeatedly with Odeh while he was in custody in Karachi. The sources said Odeh had been promised he would not be extradited and that his formation would not be conveyed to the Americans. The Pakistanis technically handed Odeh over to Kenyan authorities for return to Nairobi, but US officials took part in the transfer and have been involved in his subsequent interrogation.

According to the officials and their notes, Odeh mentioned several armed operations abroad in which he or others participated with support from bin Laden. They included:

An urban guerrilla attack in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993, in support of clan leader Mohamed Farah Aideed, which resulted in the deaths of 18 U.S. troops. Odeh said he and a group of fighters stayed in Somalia for an entire year and considered the humiliation of US troops there a major triumph.

The 1989 assassination of a Palestinian intellectual, Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, in Peshawar, Pakistan. Azzam, who had devoted years to promoting the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation, was killed with his two sons in a massive car bombing. Odeh reportedly told his captors last week that bin Laden ordered the killing because he suspected Azzam had ties to the CIA.

Operations in the Philippines, which Odeh refused to describe in detail. In an interview with CNN last spring, bin Laden said some Arab mujaheddin, or freedom fighters, from Afghanistan had participated in Somali "resistance" to the American invasion in Mogadishu. "They participated with their brothers in Somalia against the American occupation troops and killed

large numbers of them," bin Laden told interviewers. He did not say he was directly connected to that effort, however.

Odeh reportedly described bin Laden's organization as highly secretive and compartmentalized so that its members had little knowledge of operations in which they did not participate. He said it had especially large numbers of members inside Saudi Arabia, and he implied they had been involved in attack against two US military compounds there in 1995 and 1996, but he said he was not familiar with the group that had caused those bombings.

The United States has linked bin Laden to both attacks, which killed a total of 24 Americans, but bin Laden has denied it, telling CNN the attacks were "a big honor that I missed participating in."

In Islamabad Tuesday, speculation intensified that the United States may be planning a military attack against bin Laden's compound in eastern Afghanistan, possibly using Pakistan as a base. The rumors were largely based on the hasty evacuation from Pakistan of more than 180 American citizens, including more than half the US Embassy staff, on a chartered plane from the capital to Washington Tuesday.

Neither US nor Pakistani officials have been willing to comment about the mounting public perception here that the United States may be planning to attack or seize bin Laden, possibly with assistance of Pakistan.

American officials in Islamabad continued to state that the evacuation of Americans was solely a response to unspecified threats received against Americans in the wake of the 7 August bombings in Africa.

In Washington, the State Department publicly warned of threats received over the past week against embassies in Egypt, Malaysia, Yemen, Mongolia and Pakistan in the wake of the East Africa bombings. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Clinton makes public admission of relationship with Lewinsky

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But he did not try to hide the gravity of the moment. Monday's testimony marked a low point in Clinton's presidency. For months, his domestic and foreign policy initiatives were overshadowed by the spectacle of a chief executive caught in a soap opera drama with the world watching.

The full impact of the episode remains in the hands of Congress and the American people. But Clinton's second term already has been marred, his legacy tainted, analysts and Clinton allies agreed.

Much of the fallout will depend on public opinion and Congress' assessment of how outraged the American people are about their president lying to them.

And Clinton's speech told the American people what public opinion polls said they wanted to hear—an acceptance of responsibility but no details of the relationship with the young woman who has gone from obscurity to international renown without ever voicing a word in public.

"In a case like this, less is more and the American people have been consistent about that," said Rahm Emanuel, the president's senior adviser for strategy and policy.

The speech followed 4 hours of testimony by the president

with his attorneys and Starr in the room. From the federal courthouse about a mile away, 23 grand jurors watched the closed-circuit proceedings on two 10-inch television monitors.

Clinton's answers about his relationship with Lewinsky were "candid but not graphically detailed," according to a senior White House official. "The questions got in some cases," the aide said. "I don't want to pin that on Starr's people. Some of those questions may have come from the grand jurors."

Clinton refused to answer those questions explicitly, which resulted in "disputes" with the prosecutors, the aide added.

Starr reportedly reserved the right to call on the president to testify again, as a result. But the president's lawyer, David E. Kendall, told some White House advisers that he does not expect Starr to do so, one senior White House official said.

"He thinks that the questions are of such a graphic and intrusive nature that it's highly unlikely that Starr would risk a fight," the official said. The president has "solid reasons of personal privacy and institutional integrity" not to answer those questions, the adviser added.

Clinton looked "relieved and happy" when he came out of the

Map Room but "ready to go several more rounds," the aide said. Afterward, the aide said, "the first order was to ask whether he wanted to go ahead with the speech. He said, 'Absolutely. Let's get it over with.'"

The testimony was the biggest showdown of Starr's inquiry, which started with an investigation of a 20-year-old land deal and since January has focused on Clinton's relationship with Lewinsky and his alleged efforts to cover it up.

While the White House hoped that the bizarre day would end the investigation and the media's obsession with it, there was no such guarantee from Starr's office. He is required by law to send to Congress any information that might constitute evidence of an impeachable offense.

It was not yet clear how Congress would respond but some Republicans were poinedly attacking the president.

"Wasn't that pathetic. I tell you, what a jerk," Senate Judiciary Chairman Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, said. "That's the biggest mistake he's ever made."

Starr could conclude that Clinton committed perjury—an impeachable offense—by testifying under oath that he did not have sexual relations with Lewinsky in the civil sexual harassment suit of Paula Corbin Jones. It is not known how Clinton responded to questions related to possible obstruction of justice such as the retrieving of gifts that he gave to Lewinsky.

Lewinsky reportedly testified that she had engaged in sexual intimacies—short of intercourse—with the president about a dozen times over 18 months in the White House and to having an implicit understanding with the president that both would deny it.

White House advisers said that it is the president's hope that his testimony and speech will enable the American people to see his relationship with Lewinsky as a private matter and allow him to move forward. "I think they'll say, 'He owned up to it. This is a private matter and it's between the president and the first lady and it's none of our business,'" Emanuel said.

Although polls have strongly indicated that the American people would forgive Clinton if he came clean, pollsters warned that the reality of his admis-

sions could change people's minds.

"The public reactions are going to take time. If people begin to focus more on deceit and less on sex and (the belief that) it's between him and Mrs. Clinton, then I think Clinton could enjoy a drop in support," said Andy Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, which has polled extensively on the matter.

"The question is will people now do what they said they were going to do, which is accept him, and not be angry and hostile as a consequence."

The 30 percent of Americans who believed the president's story, most of whom are Democrats, are the biggest question mark: "Are they going to be so damn dispirited by him coming out and saying this that they'll not turn out to vote in the fall and not support democratic candidates?" ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

New government needs more than a few new faces

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ion leader, believes that "changing the ruling mentality, and a government that expresses the will of the people" is what is now needed. "Changing cabinets and faces with other persons with the same mentality...will not eliminate failures," Haddad added.

According to independent research centers, since 1989 Jordan has witnessed eight governments that have brought about 143 new faces into the political arena, most of whom came from the ruling circles. The average life of all of these governments was estimated at 13 months.

Dr Majali formed two governments, the first in 1993, called the "peace government". Majali, who led the Jordanian "peace team" into negotiations with the Israelis, signed the most controversial treaty in Jordan's history. He continued in power for a while facing

extreme opposition to the treaty.

Majali was again appointed to supervise the parliamentary elections last November and he has been strongly targeted by the opposition from day-one. The last two months in particular have not been easy for Majali's team. The misleading growth rate figures, the water contamination issue and the fight (and ultimate victory) to pass the draconian press and

publication law, have all taken their toll, and have created firm challenges for a new government.

Salem Al Nahas, general secretary of the leftist People's Democratic Party (Hashd), stated, "People are wondering if the new government will solve their big problems: the water crisis, unemployment, poverty, lack of human rights, corruption and nepotism."

"The country needs a transi-

tional government with a limited agenda, to enhance the democratic process and strengthen the status of the state institutions, which has been penetrated by corruption, nepotism and the monopoly of families," stated Qamhawi, who is pessimistic that the will to bring about dramatic change in Jordan's political system exists, as the ruling system has other priorities. ■



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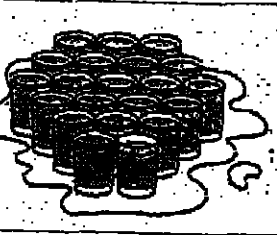
JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Water, water, water
■ It seems that all the surrounding countries have flocked to our rescue in our never-ending water shortage. Earlier this week, the government imported up to 1.5 million liters of water from Saudi Arabia and Syria. The sale of the mineral water, at 300 fils per bottle, is being supervised by the Ministry of Supply. Later on in the week, the United Arab Emirates, also donated a million liters to Jordan. A government official said this reflects the spirit of cooperation between Arab governments.



More water!

■ The water problem continues to dominate the scene in Jordan. Indeed, we can safely say that this is probably one of the worst summers Jordan has had in a long, long time. Minister of Health Ashraf Al Qudsi, said that his Ministry is testing the drinking water coming from the Zai plant, and it can find no problem. He said if they had the slightest doubt that the water was not fit for human consumption, they would have stopped it. The Ministry of Health is only responsible for chemically and biologically testing the water after the Ministry of Water has completed its own filtering processes. The Zai Plant serves the whole of West Amman. Minister Qudsi said that tests by his Ministry always showed that the water was fit for human consumption. But if this was the case then why all the fuss? "The tests have always proved that the water was drinkable, and free of all harmful substances, despite the presence of (unharmful) dead worms," the minister added.



Al Qudsi

University for women

■ A second women's university is about to be opened in Jordan. The Fatima Al Zahra University in Irbid, as the name implies, is an Islamic university, designed for parents who don't want to send their daughters to mixed universities. There are a lot of these around, and with a full university curricula, the founders are looking to the rest of the region for their student intake. The university has just been given approval to go-ahead by the Ministry of Higher Education.

Education

■ Despite the increasing number of universities, students are likely to find it very hard to get a place at these institutions this year. Not because they don't have the right *Tawjihi* grades but because of the fierce competition between students. Although places have not yet been awarded, it is thought that students wishing to enter medical schools must have at least 97.6 points, for sciences, 90.5 percent, and for languages, 93 percent.

Prisoners

■ Action at last! The Jordanian Chargé d'Affaires at the Jordanian Embassy in Tel Aviv, Ahmed Al Mifteh, said that preparations are underway to allow the families of Jordanian prisoners held in Israeli jails to visit them. There seemed to be confusion about the number of Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails, but Mr Al Mifteh said the total now stands at 14. They were originally in three different prisons but the Israeli authorities have now put them all in one prison. The visit will be made in one month's time.



Action

■ Minister of Interior Nahir Rasheed did not mince his words this week. He stated that Jordanians traveling across the bridges between Jordan and Israel have been subject to harsh treatment by Israeli authorities. Some Jordanians have recently been complaining. Mr Rasheed said that his Ministry will look into the matter. The Israeli authorities have sent some Jordanians back at the border, saying that there are discrepancies in their names on the documents they present.

This time it's Eilat

■ Israeli officials have informed the government that the waters of Eilat have been polluted as a result of waste water leakage. Deputy Prime Minister for Information, Abdallah Nsour, however, has reassured the public that this is not the case.

Fujifilm receives EISA European Product Awards for Fujicolor Superia

FUJI PHOTO Film Co., Ltd. is pleased to announce that two of its photo imaging products have been selected for Photo Products of the Year by the European Imaging and Sound Association (EISA), an organization of 40 leading magazines in 19 European countries.

Fujicolor Superia (ISO 100, 200, 400 & 800) has been voted the European Colour Film of the Year 1998-1999, and Fotonex 3500ix Zoom MRC has been voted the European APS Camera of the Year 1998-1999.

The Photo Awards are among the EISA Photo, Video, Audio and Home Theater awards annually selected by the European Imaging and Sound Association. The EISA Photo Awards Panel includes Editors-in-Chief and Technical Editors of major photo magazines in 14 countries.

The citation for Fujicolor Superia read in part: "With Fujifilm's multi-structural grain technology, each film, in the Superia family delivers exceptional sharpness compared to rival films at the same speed. Fujifilm's New Real Tone technology makes for very natural hues and extremely pleasant colour reproduction right across the range."

The citation for Fotonex 3500ix said: "Fujifilm Fotonex 3500ix Zoom MRC combines an elegant design and aluminium finish with miniaturization. The unique detachable Multi-Function Card gives unrivalled control over the most important functions of this truly compact camera. In addition, by using the MRC (mid-roll change) system, photo enthusiasts can change APS films at any time."

The awards ceremony is to take place September 16 during Photokina '98, at Restaurant Wolkenburg in Cologne, Germany.

Regent stresses transparency, democracy

AMMAN (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday affirmed that Jordan will continue developing its international and regional relations to serve national and pan-Arab interests. The Kingdom will also enhance its home accomplishments on the basis of democracy, transparency and dialogue, by achieving administrative and economic reforms.

In his remarks during a meeting with several Jordanian ambassadors, Prince Hassan stressed Jordan's efforts to develop cooperation and coordination with all Arab countries.

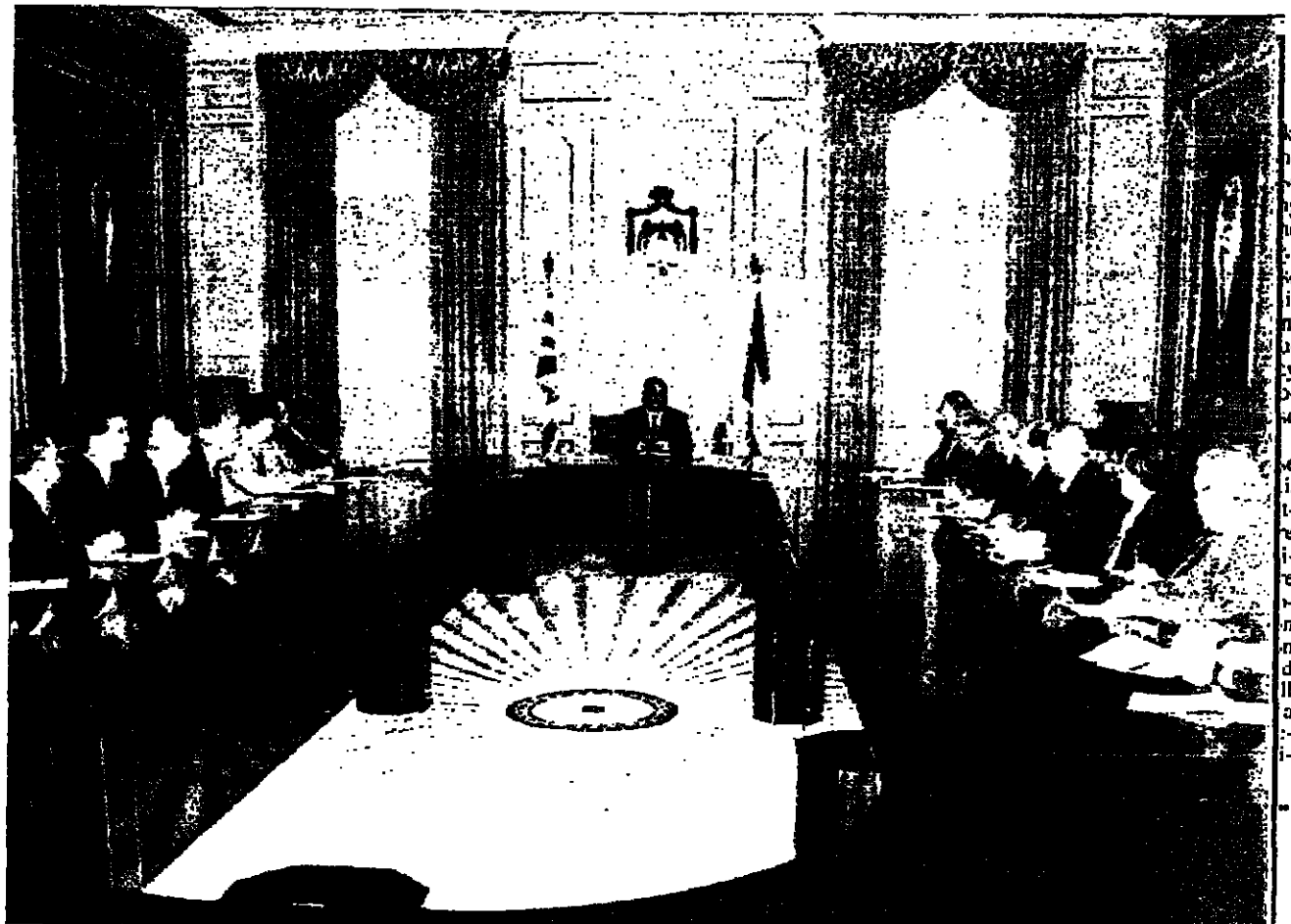
The Regent pointed to the special Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, and Jordan's keenness on the

independence of a Palestinian national identity on Palestinian national soil.

Prince Hassan stressed Jordan's clear stand against the isolation of Palestinian housing groups from each other and against the Israeli's building chains of settlement around them.

He warned of the catastrophic outcome the region will suffer if the peace process does not continue. The Regent called for comprehensive, not selective, plans to deal with weapons of mass destruction.

On the home front, Prince Hassan emphasized Jordan's seriousness about going ahead with social and economic reforms to achieve qualitative changes that will reflect positively on the people.



Senators approve harsh draft press law

AMMAN (Star)—The Upper House of Parliament passed the draft "press and publication law of 1998," which was ratified by the Lower House last week. No amendments were added.

Despite strong opposition by eight senators, the widely criticized draft received the votes of 27 senators. Thirty-five attended the session.

The only thing that the senators added was another blow to the press. Journalists and popular organizations had hoped that the Upper House would, at least, smooth the tone of the law, but the House failed to live up to expectations and passed the draft as it stood.

A number of journalists said that the Upper House Speaker played down suggestions to amend the draft which would have meant returning it to the Lower House for further discussion. A number of articles were strongly criticized by a

few of senators but efforts to pencil in a few amendments went unheeded by the majority of senators.

Senator Abdel Al Karim Al Kabarti won a majority for his recommendation to establish a Higher Press Council. However, the Speaker of the House, Zaid Al Refa'i, managed to prevent this suggestion from becoming an additional article in the law. Instead it will merely be made as a recommendation to the government. The draft law will take effect as soon as it is given a Royal seal, according to the Constitution. The Constitution also gives the King the right to send the law back to Parliament if he does not want to ratify it.

Senators opposing the draft are former Prime Minister Abdel Al Karim Al Kabarti, Laila Sharaf, former Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Thounqan Al Hindawi, Taher

Kan'an, Rajai' Mue'sher, former chief of the Royal Court Adnan Abu Odeh and leading businessman Hamdi Al Tabba'.

The Senate ignored appeals to the Speaker not to approve the draft, dubbed by a few as "anachronistic."

The Jordan Society for Human Rights stated in its letter to the Upper House that the draft, passed by the Lower House last week, includes unacceptable chains and obstacles that do not comply even with the basic principles of international conventions and human rights agreements.

The Society also states that the draft press law contradicts the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of expression.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) also sent a letter to the Upper House Speaker, calling the press and publications law a direct threat to freedom of

expression. The organization urged senators to reject provisions of the law that impose sweeping censorship, permit news blackouts, and authorize the banning of books and the suspension of newspapers and other publications.

The letter added that the law will have an enduring impact on Jordanian society because of its highly restrictive approach to what can be legally printed and distributed in the Kingdom. "Unless the Senate takes action to reject or substantially revise the problematic provisions, this law will increase self-censorship, limit the public's access to a diversity of news, information and ideas, and drastically affect the content of what is written, published and read in Jordan," said Hanny Megally, executive director of the Middle East and North Africa division of HRW. All of these calls have gone unheeded.

Officials responsible for water crisis face a slippery future

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

IN AN unprecedented move in Jordan, the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) has filed a lawsuit against officials at the Ministries of Water and Health who are accused of being responsible for the current water contamination controversy.

The NSCP wants to make sure that those responsible are brought to account. It hopes that by doing this, the chances of negligence on such a scale would be greatly reduced. The NSCP is confident that it will win the case. "This time, the issue is critical, involving the citizen's most essential commodity: water," said Dr Mohammed Obeidat, NSCP President.

Among the plaintiffs are Dr Obeidat himself, and lawyers Mahmoud Al Kilani, and other individuals badly affected by the contaminated water. Asked about the benefit of taking those responsible to court, Mr Al Kilani pointed out, "we are con-

fident that those responsible would be brought to justice."

The case is now with the Amman Magistrates Court, and the first hearing is expected at the end of this month.

However, some observers say that filing such a case is useless. "The government is about to leave soon, so there is not enough time to penalize those responsible. What we need is an extraordinary prosecutor like Kenneth Starr, who forced even President Clinton to confess," said Abu Samer, an owner of a local supermarket.

Dr Obeidat tells *The Star* that, "the case will continue to be heard even after the government's departure because it is not the government itself that is on trial, but those officials responsible for the con-



Obeidat

the officials themselves at the Ministries of Water and Health had admitted that the water in some parts of West Amman tasted, looked and smelt bad. This means there was a direct violation in standards and specifications.

"Legally, it is prohibited to offer any item for public consumption if it doesn't comply with the specified standards," said advocate, Ahmed Al Keilani. He elaborated, saying, "the objective behind the case is twofold: to serve as a private deterrent, and as a public deterrent. The case will send a clear message to all officials in positions of responsibility that they will face prosecution if they fail to perform their duties to the required standard."

It seems that the wide media coverage given to the water crisis has borne fruit. Some ministers and senior officials are now having to face up to their responsibilities and will have to provide testimony in court. Indeed, should the government be forced to stand down, then filing the case would in itself be an achievement.

Price of wheat falls but consumers not reaping the benefits

Continued from page 1

Committee said that discussions about this vital issue will continue after the extraordinary session, which will end next Saturday following a Royal Decree.

"I don't accept the figures presented by the Minister of Finance, since we are not stupid enough to believe that JD 82-million had been paid out to citizens," Obeidat stated, calling on the Hafez to provide citizens or a specialized committee with the latest detailed information. "We are talking here about bread subsidy, not other items like sugar or milk, so I ask the minister to show experts all the statistics and information he has, so they can judge," he added.

Obeidat himself supervised a study carried out by the NSCP,

the results of which indicated that 97.7 percent of Jordanians considered current bread prices inappropriately high and asked that the government lower them.

"It's natural to get this result since the annual cost of bread for a family of seven will be much higher than the subsidy provided by the government, so the ministry of finance still profits," Obeidat concluded.

Of course it is more than a bread problem—all items made of wheat are affected by the prices. The Minister of Finance was unavailable for comment on the issue. However, Hanawi remarked, "I think it's a matter of transparency and credibility, since international prices are standard, so any drop in those prices should affect ours."



Down memory lane: the "Bread Riots" in Ma'an

Taher Al Masri
A politician who will not quit

By Ali Saadeh
Special to The Star

HE COULD have remained in his post as prime minister for a longer period, his government could have stayed in office longer, but he handled the issue as a gentleman and refused to hide behind His Majesty the King or make compromises with Lower House deputies and decision makers, secretly or openly. Either his government or the Lower House had to leave, but it was he who left, along with his cabinet after six months in office in 1991.

Taher Al Masri started his political career back in 1973 when then prime minister Zeid Al Rifaa' brought him into his first government. Also in that year, Al Masri became a deputy in the Jordanian parliament representing his hometown Nablus in the West Bank.

But Al Masri started out his life as a technocrat because of his academic background as an economics graduate from one of the American universities in Texas.

However, he soon found another love and became deeply immersed in politics. Despite the fact that it is a tiresome and exhausting business, once you are hooked, it stays in the blood.

Al Rifaa' called on him again after the parliamentary process was frozen in 1974. For the next 10 years, his political life took another 'external' twist.

He was to become a roving diplomat serving as an ambassador in many of the world's capitals. However, the 1980s and 1990s, were another watershed for Taher Al Masri, when he again became a member of parliament in 1984, joining the 10th Lower House.

Because of his rich diplomatic experience Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat appointed him as Foreign Minister in that year. He remained in this post when Al Rifaa' formed another government in 1985.

However, he resigned in 1988. The real reasons for his resignation were not disclosed at the time. Despite this, Al Masri acknowledges the fact that his post at the Foreign Ministry increased his appetite for politics.

This feeling was reinforced after he was appointed as deputy prime minister in the first government of Prince Zeid Bin Shaker in April 1989.

This boosted his self-confidence and encouraged him to run for the first comprehensive parliamentary elections held since 1967. His election win for the Third District in the 11th Lower House in 1989 was a major achievement. His political success continued when, in June 1991, he became prime minister. He was at the height of his political career, masterly navigating the intricacies of local, regional and world politics at a time when talk about the peace conference and the Madrid process were just at the initial stages.

His appointment as a premier was also seen as a victory for the Lower House as he was the first deputy from that bastion of democracy.

But his political fortunes were soon to end, and in a rather surprising manner. His government didn't even get beyond its honeymoon period.

Al Masri felt stabbed in the back by his own colleagues in the House, who called for a vote of no confidence in his government. Outraged and wounded, Al Masri quietly resigned without making a fuss.

However, Al Masri is a realist, believing that politics is the art of the possible. Although his premiership was a turbulent one based on internal rather than external politics, he essentially believed in conciliation rather than confrontation.

After his resignation, he quickly came to the fore preparing for the next parliamentary elections in 1993. He was re-elected for Amman's Third District where for the next year or so, he was elected as speaker of the 12th Lower House.

Today Al Masri continues to be an active politician and makes his views on the political arena known. His rich experience in public life should not be underestimated and should be used for the benefit of the Kingdom.

Didn't they arrest any Arabs?



Our Say...

Nailing the great lie

IT WAS a field day for the American press, the Republicans, and a great number of amused people around the world. But most of all, it was a personal triumph for independent counsel Kenneth Starr, who had set out to investigate, and bring down, President Clinton four years ago.

Through dogged determination, and sheer luck, Starr was finally able to snare Bill Clinton—a sitting president and the most powerful man on Earth—and force him to admit publicly that he did have “an inappropriate relationship” with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The embattled president was forced to reveal the truth, including details of his 18-month affair with Lewinsky, after Starr served him with a subpoena to appear before a grand jury—set up to investigate wrong-doing by the president of the United States.

Later, in a televised address to the nation, Clinton spoke about the failure of judgement and the personal and political dilemmas which motivated him to mislead the public, and his wife. And he rounded it off saying that it was a purely personal issue, which concerned him, his wife Hillary, his daughter Chelsea and God.

Was it said in a spirit of contrition, or was there a note of subtle defiance? People across the world, especially in the US, and pundits are engaged in gauging the tone and tenor of his words. The ambiguity which clings to Clinton's confession raises important questions about public life and private morality. It makes us wonder about the ethical quandary we find ourselves in at the end of the century.

True, neither Starr nor those backing him, has any right to judge Clinton and his foibles. After all, there could be a hidden right-wing political conspiracy to tarnish the image of a liberal president. But there is also the fact that Clinton did falter, did stray, and had lied about it. An American lawyer observed rather acutely that it did not matter that Clinton erred in his private life, but it does matter that he lied about it, and wanted to get away with it. That is the worrisome thing about the whole episode: breach of trust. He lied to his family, but more importantly he lied to the nation. And he admitted to the lying only as a last line of defense. In this legal duel between a stolid Starr and a humiliated Clinton, who emerges as the hero? The laws of media publicity say that the man who is the focus of the controversy, however queasy, is still on top, according to latest polls. Starr has to occupy a secondary role in this morality play.

Clinton's faulty and faltering conduct through the whole scandal should serve as a reminder to a people unable to decide on fundamental issues because we are living in an age where values have taken a backseat. And these are the agonizing moments when we need to look for signposts to guide our acts and thoughts.

There is a temptation to forget it all and move on. The Lewinsky scandal has lasted for too long, and has even become a trifle boring. But it could still cost Clinton his job. On the other hand, we cannot adopt a self-righteous tone and castigate Clinton's perfidy. It should make each one of us aware of the many pitfalls that lie on our way. Public values arise from private morality. Clinton was wrong again to argue that his private trauma has no bearing on public life. ■

Israel's fairplay could have avoided Africa bombings

By Michael Jansen

IT IS bitterly ironic that Israel, perhaps a major contributor to the bombings at the US embassies in Nairobi and Kenya, should emerge as the humanitarian hero of the operation to rescue Kenyans from the pancaked building next to the US embassy.

The “perhaps” is a very serious qualification. For, so far, no proven link has been established between the East African bombings and Middle Eastern militants—nationalist or Islamist.

The Tanzanian and then the Kenyan governments seem to have detained handy Muslims (16 Arabs and a Turk) for questioning without any clear proof that they are implicated in the bombings.

The phrase characterizing their random sweeps is “rounding up the usual suspects.” If and when a Middle Eastern or Muslim connection is made with the bombings, the role of the Israeli army in digging out the African victims becomes tragically ironic for several serious reasons.

First and foremost because if there had been no Israel there would have been no Middle Eastern or Muslim “militants” determined to wreak revenge on the US for its unquestioning support for the Jewish state over the past 50 years.

Second, if the US had chosen to adopt an even-handed position vis-a-vis the Jewish state, on the one hand, and the Palestinians and the Arab and Muslim world, on the other, then Washington would not have to worry about the safety of its diplomats or the security of its embassies.

Third, if the US had, belatedly, honoured its obligations to the Arabs and imposed a viable peace process following the 1991 Gulf War under which Israel withdrew from territories it occupied in 1967, Palestinian-Arab-Muslim “militants” would have had no reason to attack US embassies in these two African cities.

A viable peace process would have given the Palestinians self-determination on their land, returned occupied territories to the Syrians and Lebanese, established Israel's borders and guaranteed its security and enabled US officials and citizens the chance to breathe freely when abroad.

But peace did not come because Israel refused to hand over land and the US failed to press Israel to do so. It is anger and resentment against prolonged injustice which begets an abiding desire for revenge amongst Arabs and Muslims.

“Terrorism” has become the only means which they have to take revenge against their persecutors. “Terrorism” springs from a soil well-watered with the blood of innocent victims from helplessness and hopelessness.

Israel's high profile role in the Kenya rescue operation is also paradoxical because the Jewish state has, with domestically-manufactured and US-supplied bombs, demolished hundreds of buildings in Ismailiya, Port Said and Cairo, Damascus and Beirut, killing tens of thousands of people.

Israeli army expertise in rescuing victims of “terrorist” bombings must be weighed against its much greater expertise in dropping bombs on civilian targets and creating precisely the kind of disasters the world is now witnessing in East Africa.

It is not at all surprising that Beirut, seeing the five-storey office block brought down by the Nairobi bombers, should recognize hundreds of similarly “pancaked” buildings along the Rue de Damas in the Lebanese capital. (Whenever an old Beirut like this correspondent sees video of such destruction the delicate scent of cordite pervades the images on the television screen and the shrill scream of ambulances fills my ears.)

In this crisis as in many others the US has been its own worst enemy. Inensitive and self-centred the US officials who concentrated their efforts on the embassy building in Nairobi handed over the rescue effort in the adjacent block to the Israelis.

So, Israel, perhaps a major cause of the tragedy, gets the credit for rescuing its victims. Furthermore, US Ambassador Prudence Bushnell turned up in a bright red suit for the Israeli-led commemoration service last week at the site of the bombed out building.

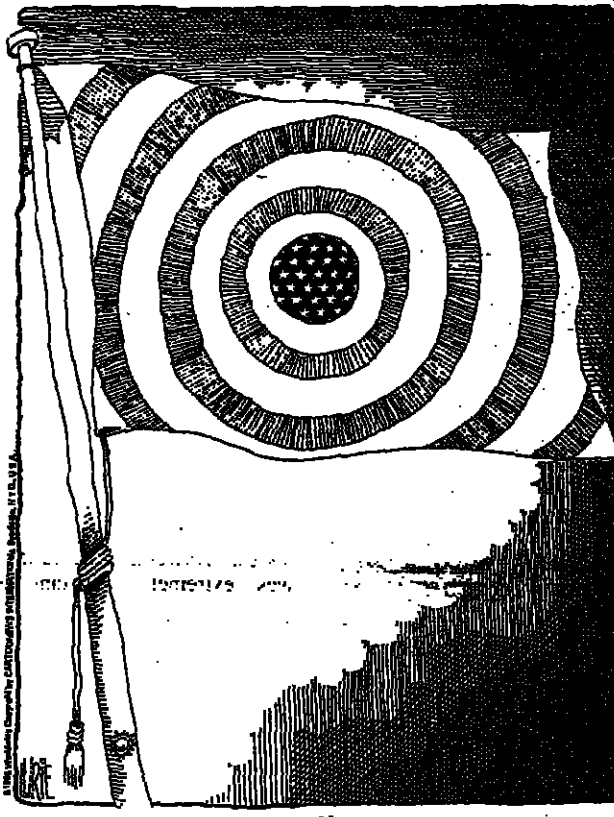
Nowhere in the world is red a sign of mourning. Black would have been appropriate, dark blue (as worn by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright when she flew to Germany to meet the bodies of the slain diplomats) would have been acceptable.

Another irony: The cost of upgrading security at the US embassies round the world was put at US\$3.2 billion by the State Department several years ago, but Congress did not grant “State” the funds to carry out such work—including at the sub-standard Nairobi embassy.

This figure corresponds exactly with official US aid to Israel (which is, unofficially, more than double this figure). So, if Congress had taken US interests into account, rather than the demands of an ever demanding Israel, the sums needed to protect US embassies from anti-US anti-Israeli bombers could have been made available and casualties, including those of the Salam cabin, have been much fewer.

Indeed, if the proper precautions had been taken at these facilities, bombers would not have targeted them and lives, 95 percent Kenyan, would have been preserved. The real tragedy is that it is not Washington alone which suffers for its enduring attachment to the Jewish state. ■

Lurie's NewsCartoon



(Here, there, U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania suffer Israeli, unexpected terrorist attacks. American institutions worldwide brace themselves for more violence.)

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Gaily Today

The zealots of Afghanistan

The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order of Afghanistan, by Peter Marsden. London, Zed Books, pp162. Reviewed by Rupert Edis

THE TALIBAN—The Islamic zealots who now rule the bulk of Afghanistan—inhabit a baffling limbo between the 7th and 20th centuries. On the one hand, they blithely chop off limbs as punishment for petty theft. On the other, they proselytize for the cause on the Internet. Their Homepage is a harangue on America and the West.

Their PR image in the West has not been good. Since coming to power in Kabul in 1996, they acquired international notoriety for their ultra-puritanical interpretation of Muslim Sharia law. Bananas have been banned as aphrodisiacs. Women have been segregated and forced to take the veil. Beards are now compulsory for men. Televisions have been destroyed as instruments of Satan.

But it is the Taliban treatment of sexual “crimes” that has attracted the greatest attention—and condemnation—in the West. The Koranic sentences of flogging and stoning have been extensively imposed. And in one recent case, the “stoning” of three homosexuals was carried out by using a T-54 tank to collapse a wall on to the condemned.

Militarily, the Taliban are the most mysterious force to have appeared in Afghanistan since Alexander the Great. Beginning in 1994 as a local revolt by religious students (which is what “Taliban” means) in the southern city of Kandahar, their rise to power has been as puzzling as their creed. Led by the one-eyed Mullah Omar, their band of puritans rapidly conquered two thirds of the country. Two years later they had captured the capital, Kabul, and hanged the former president Najibullah in a public square.

How are we to judge such a movement? For a start, Peter Marsden argues, we must put aside the series of negative stereotypes that so often skew the relations between Islam and the West. The gender issue is a good example. The Taliban have attracted the greatest international condemnation by



Afghani women and their children must now look to a new life under the Taliban

closing girls' schools and forbidding women to work. Yet as this book points out, Western attitudes to women working have only changed markedly during this century. Can it therefore be right to apply the values of Washington or Islington to a traditional agricultural culture in its 20th year of war?

In their war-economy, the Taliban argue, women are most needed in the home, bringing up the next generation of fighters for the cause. The two percent of Afghan women who actually held salaried jobs before the takeover are irrelevant to this wider struggle. Indeed, the Taliban feels resentful that attention is not focused instead on what they regard as their greatest achievement so far: the imposition of order on a country that until their arrival was being torn to pieces by Mujahideen factions in an internecine civil war.

They may not need to be resentful for long. For, despite the West's moral outrage at the fundamentalist zealotry emanating from Kabul's mosques, it may serve our

turn to have a stable Afghanistan. The book is particularly good on the equivocal role played by the Americans. The US tacitly backed the Pax Talibana. Their hope was that regional stability would allow a US company to build a pipeline to bring Central Asia's energy reserves via Afghanistan, rather than through the territory of its old enemy, Iran.

Recently the “gender lobby” has pushed US policy—or at least US rhetoric—towards a more trenchant stance against the Taliban regime.

The main question that emerges from the book is: faced with another manifestation of radical Islam, whose values are so diametrically opposed to our own, will there ever be room for meaningful “dialogue”? Or was Kipling right: “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet”? ■

Sunday Telegraph

Middle East
East
by
Khairi Jambak

Human rights

IN A long conversation with an influential adviser on human rights to many UN agencies, one discussed issues related to various freedoms, and repression, laws of apostasy, holy war and peace.

But the conversation left an uncomfortable feeling in one's own psyche. The trouble was in the fact that, as one mentioned in the conversation, Jordan suffers extreme shortage of water, and that we have a pollution problem, but apart from a simple glance of sympathy, the subject was glossed over, and we went on to tackle many other international problems that may or may not have any relevance to indigenous rights.

This has been a cruel reminder of the trouble suffered by the UN Declaration of Human Rights, since its inception. Its desired indivisibility was divided between the interpretations of the socialist camp, and that of the liberal democratic west.

The former insisted on socio-economic rights, while the latter upheld political rights, without realizing over 40 years, that what they both lacked was essentially what mattered. The 50th anniversary of the Declaration is taking place in the age of rampant nationalism, and religious extremism, with alliances created and dismantled capriciously. The continued dealing with abstraction is making many in the world, not just call for freedom of religion, but also freedom from the freedom of religion.

A selective approach to universal problems, based on ethnocentric approach is likely to alienate rather than attract support to the cause of human rights.

Obviously, practicality of application requires policies, and those in turn will have to be comprehensive and adhere to the principles of universalism. In this respect, HRH Crown Prince Hassan's call for a new type of political thinking has at the core of the issue at hand. Anthropologists, has come to declare the purpose of politics for the people. It has become the domain where people matter, and encompasses all that is relevant to the individual and community. It is based on the age-long Hasemite principles of optimism and rationalism, rooted in the Islamic faith that extends its moderation to the whole of humanity.

Politically, it came out to declare pluralism and dialogue, convergence rather than divergence, consensus and not clash. It sets out an example of unity in diversity. And equality that disregards creed, race or religion. In the economic field, the individual again is at the heart of the matter, for it affirms the right of the individual to seek prosperity and pursue happiness, while at the same time emphasizes the need to care and help the most vulnerable groups.

It advocates constraint as opposed to exploitation and solidarity among social groups, for after all the individual does not live in a vacuum. In the cultural sphere, peace and dialogue are the main pivots of anthropology. Promoting understanding and cultural dialogue with open-mindedness, have indicated the need to more of the same, as the question of peace among nations requires dialogue among the religious and other community leaders as part of the confidence building among peoples. NGOs have to be more pro-active in this formula, take the lead when officialdom is lagging, and complement government efforts, when gaps emerge.

The human element is the cause and consequence of anthropologists, and there is great recognition for its approach in the international community, especially when it is becoming increasingly necessary to build relations among nations, that are based on moral and ethical considerations. The protection of human rights must not be conditional on the occurrence of abuse, but rather it's an ongoing process of development that takes in totality the rights of the individual. ■

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Jordan Press & Publishing Co. (Ad-Dustour). Editorial & Advertising: Telephone 5664153 Fax 5667170 P.O. Box 591 Postal Code 11118 Amman - Jordan. e-mail: Star@arabia.com URL: http://www.star.arabia.com

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Business scene

Woolen Industries Co. recorded satisfactory results in the first half of this year. Its sales generated net profits estimated at JD 376,000, rising from JD 64,000 in the first half of last year to JD 78,000 by the end of last June. The company's balance sheet reached JD 1.87 million in June and its assets stand at JD 1.4 million.

Arab Potash Co. has generated profits estimated at JD 6.3 million during the first half of this year, a decline of about 21 percent compared with the same time last year. Revenues also dropped 5.4 percent on the figure generated in the first half last year to JD 44.2 million. However, the company's mid-annual budget showed that production rose 1.6 percent to 6.24 million tons. Output is expected to be 85.5 million tons by the fall of this year. The company's assets are JD 339 million.

Overall premiums generated by insurance companies rose to JD 90.2 million last year, compared with JD 89.7 million in 1996. Insurance companies recorded JD 6.3 million in net profits last year. Technical reserves rose to JD 59.5 million in 1997 against JD 53.6 million in 1996. Paid up capital of insurance companies increased by 35 percent to reach JD 51 million in 1997, compared with JD 37.7 million in 1996. Total investments by the insurance sector also went up by 16.6 percent to reach JD 124.8 million, compared with JD 107 million in 1996. There are 26 operating insurance companies in Jordan offering many different types of insurance cover.

Jordan takes the third largest share of oil in accordance with the oil for food deal concluded in December 1996 between Iraq and the United Nations. France took the lion's share, followed by Australia. The Kingdoms total contracts are worth \$305.3 million for the three stages of the deal. All contracts awarded by the UN are worth about \$357.12 million: \$111.4 million for the first stage, \$100.9 million for the second phase and \$93 million for the third. About \$101 million on pharmaceuticals, and \$186 million for foodstuffs.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 12 August

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SEK	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DM	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Melon slump highlights larger agricultural problems

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

MELONS ARE one of the most popular fruits for thirst quenching, but this year the melon season has been disappointing for both consumers and retailers. Merchants who had bet on a strong harvest didn't reap the profits they were expecting, especially during the heat wave that swept the kingdom this summer.

Many consumers complained that the taste of the muskmelon and water melon this season was not good, sometimes it was sour, though it is fully ripe.

People have been blaming the farmers for adding chemicals to the fruits and vegetables to make the crops grow quicker. However, the farmers deny these claims saying that farms all over the world use chemicals in agriculture, either in the form of fertilizers or pesticides to guarantee a good harvest. They refute claims that they have been using growth hormones to speed up the ripening process of their crops.

Today there is a big surplus of melon at the central vegetable and fruits market, in supermarkets, and at the many roadside stalls—there has simply been no demand. Consumers have become reluctant to buy their favorite fruit.

Melons, Melons, get your water melons!

Consequently, farmers have

faced unprecedented losses with their crops of muskmelon. One farm owner, enthusiastic about the national product, argued, "I defy any country to produce as good output as Jordan does in fruits or vegetables, but I believe that the heat wave has destroyed many farms and in some cases their entire crops, leading to total loss." He added that farmers are spending a lot of money on chemicals and the land is becoming saturated with these substances, which ultimately affects the crops.

Another farmer points out to an error committed by some farmers who spray the crops with pesticides and don't wait long enough before they harvest the crops. "It's better we wait at least three days before collecting the crops in order to make sure that the effect of the pesticide is over."

The heat wave was not only restricted to melon crops. Farmers who grow tomatoes, bananas and other kinds of vegetables are also bearing severe losses. However, one farmer, was extremely reluctant to speak frankly, but said, "I know some farmers who use growth hormones which they bring from Israel and other countries on trucks carrying fruits and vegetables." Most farm owners, however, denied that they ever use these hormones.



Tomatoes... waiting for buyers

UMS wins Asria Dairy account

UNITED MEDIA Service (UMS) recently won the account for Asria Dairy Company (ADC). ADC is a member of the prominent Alayyan Group, which was formed in 1958, and currently incorporates Alayyan Trading Company, Unity Trading Establishment, Hyundai and Asria Dairy. Alayyan Group employs a total of 500 people.

Established in 1995, Asria is widely known as a quality provider of a wide range of dairy products and juices, including UHT products, yoghurt, labneh, ice cream and fruit juices, that all made from natural fresh ingredients.

Asria's main objective is to achieve a quality excellence and maintains the consumer's satisfaction. Asria's factory is capable of meeting the growing demand in the Jordanian market by using sophisticated, state-of-the-art equipment and implementing the

most developed production methods applied by the most distinguished producers of dairy products in the world.

Asria's competitive edge was rewarded by Chiquita Brands Inc., a multinational corporation. By which, Asria was granted the licence to apply Chiquita's brand on its production of natural juices. Thus, committing itself to producing only the best quality under strict sanitary conditions in accordance with the Current Good Manufacturing Practices of the US Food and Drug Association (FDA).

Both ADC and UMS are known for their high caliber and persistence in elevating Jordan's business standards to meet the international scale. UMS is the affiliate of TEAM/ Young and Rubicam in Jordan which is the leading advertising agency in the region with regional expansion that covers the majority of the Gulf states and the Middle East. Young

and Rubicam is the world's third largest international advertising agency.

UMS is a fully-fledged advertising and marketing communications agency. It currently handles a number of major accounts in Jordan including: Hotel Intercontinental Jordan, Peugeot, Jordan Public Payphones (JPP), Petra Engineering Industries, Lufthansa, UNDP, Citibank, Mazda, International Traders, Jordan Data Systems (JDS), Fiat, Gulf Air - Jordan, Samsung Mobile Phones and others.

The affiliation of both UMS and TEAM/ Y&R has developed significant growth in the past year. Combining the highest international advertising standards and a thorough knowledge of the Jordanian market, leads to a better understanding of the Jordanian consumer trends.



Melons, Melons, get your water melons!

Jordan economic reform program achieves objectives

AMMAN (Petra)— "Jordan's economic reform program has achieved its full objectives, in terms of restoring economic balance and deepening world trust in Jordan's economy to grow and prosper," said Director General of the Arab-Banking Corporation, Jawad Hadeed. Speaking at a lecture at the Jordan Hotel, Hadeed said the reform program has enabled Jordan to increase its foreign currency reserve to \$160 million, up from \$50 million before the program started. This enabled the Jordanian dinar to maintain a fixed exchange rate against the dollar.

Jordan also, Hadeed added, reduced its foreign debts to \$6.5 billion, down from \$8.5 billion in 1989—the year the program started. Inflation rates have been minimized and foreign investment and financial aid have gone up remarkably.

Since 1989, Jordan has received over one billion dollars from the European Union alone.

Japan faces 'deflationary spiral'

By Gillian Tett and Alexandra Harney in Tokyo

JAPAN IS in danger of entering a deflationary spiral and will see the economy worsen before it improves, a senior Japanese politician yesterday warned.

Speaking to Japanese television, Taichi Sakaiya, head of the Economic Planning Agency, said: "There are problems with the financial sector and sentiment is very bad. I would say there is a danger of entering a deflationary spiral."

The comment represents a startling turnaround from the EPA's previous position: until recently it was insisting that the economy remained simply "stagnant" and was forecasting 1.9 percent growth in the current fiscal year.

However, his comments come amid rising concern that Japan's economic weakness could drag down the stock market and yen. The yen yesterday remained around the ¥145 level to the dollar, after Eisuke Sakakibara, influential vice minister of finance for international affairs, warned that the government was considering intervention. However, the Nikkei 225, the key stock market indicator, fell 1.58 percent to close at 15,123.93, its ninth consecutive daily fall.

And Mr Sakaiya's comments came as a new tide of weak economic data yesterday suggested that sentiment in Japan was becoming worse, not better, in spite of a recent package of measures unveiled by Keizo Obuchi, prime minister.

Tokyo Shoko, a credit research group, reported that the number of corporate bankruptcy cases surged last month by 26 percent over July last year to 1,673—a postwar record for the month. Separately, Teikoku data, another research group, reported that corporate failures rose by an annual 35.7 percent in July to 1,710 cases according to its figures, also a record for the month.

The data came as Showa Plastics, a small Osaka-based plastics group, yesterday filed for bankruptcy with ¥17.7bn (\$122m) in liabilities. This fol-

lows the bankruptcy of Mita Industrial, the copy machine group, earlier this week. The group, which will be taken over by Kyocera, the electronics manufacturer, had ¥200bn in liabilities.

Taken together, the moves are likely to fuel fears that Japan's long-running banking sector problems could be about to provoke a new vicious new circle of corporate pain.

The government is drawing

up plans to help ease the banks' problems. However, the International Monetary Fund warned earlier this week that Japan needed to take more urgent and sweeping action.

Meanwhile, in yet another sign of the collapse in Japanese consumer demand, an industry association reported yesterday that sales at Tokyo department stores tumbled 5 percent year-on-year in July.

The decline was particularly

striking because turnover was expected to increase as a result of summer bargain sales and the corporate gift-giving season that falls in July.

Japan's economic turmoil has dumped consumer demand. Retail sales have fallen every consecutive month except one for over a year, following an increase in the consumption tax in April 1997.

Financial Times Syndication

Lurie's NewsCartoon



The Falling Yen

MARKET WATCH 9-12 August

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TADINCO Nizak Industry Arab Investment Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Electricity Nizak Industry Zag Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nar Insurance Arab Electricity TADINCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Bank United Financial Gulf Insurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nar Insurance Industry Union Trade Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Industry Nizak Industry Industrial Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Kuwait Bank Arab Bank International Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Bank National Investment United Industry
General Price Pointer: 167.420	169.590	172.120	174.630
Trade Volume: 708,664	128,9190	897,638	1068,477
Stock Volume: 569,966	838,927	569,916	540,029
Highest Traded Stocks:			
Al-Ahli Bank: 148,975	Tourism Hotels: 289,100	Der Al-Jawab: 131,084	Arab Bank: 433,725

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

Salt: guaranteed to appeal to all tastes

The Star's reporter Ghassan Joha reflects on the history and culture of Jordan's ancient capital

JORDAN IS full of natural wonders and historical sites. You can explore mosaics in Irbid, ancient castles and palaces in the desert, learn about Nabatean civilization in Petra and bathe in hot springs all over the kingdom. If it is a historical city you want, however, Salt, the former capital of Jordan and the present capital of Balqa, has a lot to offer the discerning visitor.

Salt is considered today as one of the most ancient cities in Jordan with a dramatic history dating back to 3000 years BC. The name of the city comes from the Latin, *Saltus*, the fertile valley, an appropriate name for this strategic site on the trade route between west and east.

Approaching the city by car or bus, about 28 kilometres to the northeast of Amman, your first glimpse of Salt is of her high mountains. The city itself, is a rich combination of ancient and modern features of the nation's history.

The first site any visitor from Amman will see is the city's "Martyrs' Memorial", built on the 100th anniversary of the city's first municipal council, in 1993. Moving on into the heart of Salt, the downtown area, you will notice the distinctive architectural style of the buildings.

The streets have their heritage as well. Skafiyeh Street is pleasant to amble along, flanked on both sides by numerous houses and shops. This will lead to "Al-Mughrabli Cafe", where you will always find a generous welcome from the seated, argilla smoking clientele.

Today, the population of Salt has reached about 70,000. Ask any one of them how they feel about living in Salt, the reply will always be positive. Saleh Kilani is a long time resident of the city. "I consider myself lucky to be Jordanian, and to have been born in Salt," the 57-year-old retired policeman told *The Star*.

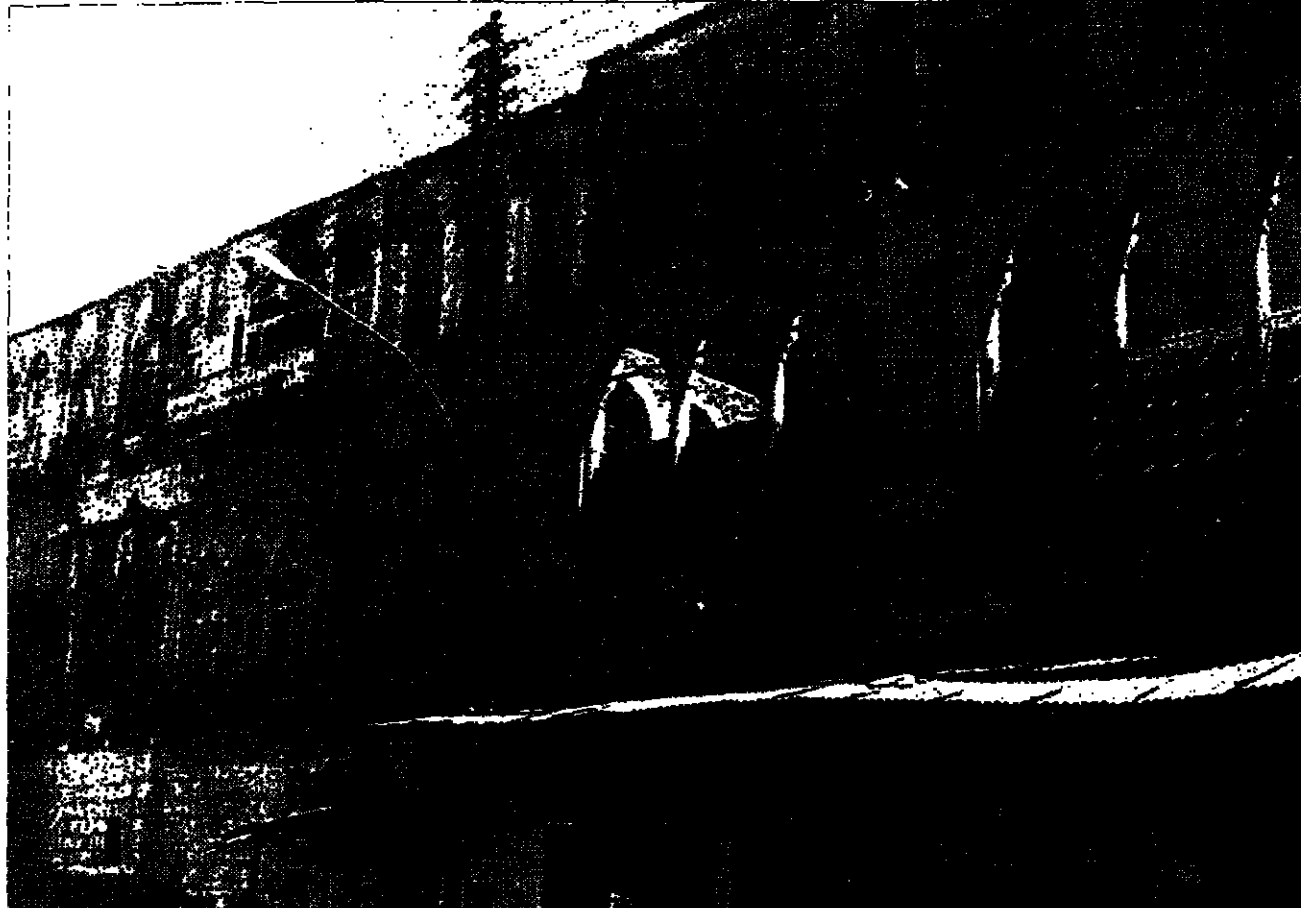
Mr Kilani now lives in Abu-Jaber Palace, one of the prominent houses in the city, established back in 1901 and once occupied by the late King Abdullah.

Although he was born in the West Bank town of Tubass, he began his new life in Salt after 1967. Mr Kilani praised the lifestyle of Salt—everyone is friendly, brotherly and gets along with each other, and we are intent on preserving family values and traditions.

His neighbor, Ahmed El-Hyari, agrees. "The city still preserves its originality and traditions, which defines the people who live there." However, Mr El-Hyari reflected on the migrating trend of Salt's youth to Amman, in search of work. "The younger generation is moving to Amman in great numbers, forgetting that their leaving harms the city's history and heritage," he added.

Preservation is very important to Salt. The gradual neglect of the city's buildings—the majority of the houses are built using the soft, yellow stone, unique to Salt—was cause for concern for architects and archaeologists. Restoration work has been completed, and is ongoing.

Other interests in Salt include the city's famous castle, monuments, old churches and monasteries. The castle was built during the early Islamic period, was



Salt's history is reflected in its architecture

destroyed by the Crusaders, but was rebuilt again by the Ayyoubians in 1220. Other sites of interest include the Roman cemetery in the Salt valley, Khirbet El-Souq, the old cavern, prophet Ushua's tomb, the National

Museum, an Salt's secondary school—the first of its type in the Kingdom, founded in 1923.

The Salt Handicraft Centre (SHC), is one of the most popular sites in the city. Here you can observe the traditional skills

of ceramics, weaving, silk-screen printing and dyeing. The SHC is a vocational school for young artisans, who receive expert tuition in the traditional arts. Located in the centre of the old town of Salt, the project is self-financing.

Why not end your visit at 'Salt Zaman,' where you can sip your coffee or tea, or enjoy a pleasant meal in the beautifully restored restaurant—a great place to relax and reflect upon the sights and sounds of Salt.



Salt city center

Don't wear shorts with a sarong

John Mason adjusts to a new way of thinking in Bali

I had become a parody of the blundering Englishman abroad. Hiding behind bushes, I was making a re-markable mess of trying to wrap a sarong around my waist and legs. Too loose and it fell down around my ankles. Too tight and I could barely walk.

Eventually, I realised that, in the 30°C (85°F) heat of midday Bali, wearing knee-length shorts underneath a sarong is an unnecessary encumbrance. My wardrobe streamlined, I was cooler and finally able to walk. I joined the crowd of several thousand heading for the temple of Pura Sakeng. The occasion was Kunigan, an annual holy day honouring ancestors and saints and one of the most important Balinese religious celebrations.

Wearing a sarong is not my usual style. I generally winced with embarrassment at the sight of backpackers arriving almost anywhere in south-east Asia and promptly winding local cloth around their waists. If in Texas, do they promptly rush out and buy a Stetson? Sadly, they might, I suppose.

However, I was acting on sound local advice. My hotel manager had steered me towards Kunigan in the first place, suggesting I postpone a diving trip to do so. The festivities surrounding Kunigan would be

far more interesting, he said. But make sure to wear a sarong out of respect, he insisted.

The advice proved reliable. With all its attractions, Bali has been a mature tourist resort for some years. Although by no means wrecked by mass tourism many countries have squandered their potential in far worse ways neither is it the untouched idyll discovered by the first wave of European tourists.

In the island's south, where tourist development is concentrated, it is hard to escape the industry which now dominates most of the island. The sprawl of Kuta, which developed around its surfing beach, remains a by-word for noisy, brash excess. Nearby, it is now possible to spend all day bungee-jumping or paint-gun fighting in the bushes.

Ubud, billed as the nearby cultural and artistic centre of Bali, is still a relaxed and intriguing place to visit. Yet it is now possible, thanks to satellite television, to sit in one of its restaurants and watch live coverage of English soccer matches. Arsenal versus Barnsley was showing when I was there.

However, it is too easy to write off Bali as spoilt, as festivals such as Kunigan bear

out. Although it takes place just a few miles from the main drags of Kuta, it seemed to go largely unwatched by visitors. Which was their loss.

It is the colour and scale of the event which immediately impresses. It attracts people in their thousands. From early in the morning until sunset, they travel to Pura Sakeng and other temples on foot or in cars, open-top trucks or riding, four at a time, on the ubiquitous family motorcycle.

The wearing of traditional cloths means the festival is a moving mass of reds, golds, greens and yellows. These are mixed with the colours of commerce flags advertising Coca-Cola and stalls selling everything from jewellery to bright plastic inflatable Superman toys.

While the honouring of saints makes it a serious occasion, it is also cheerful. The pace of the crowd is slow and easy as people stop along the route to chat. However, at the temple itself, things become more serious. Groups of offerings such as palm ornaments. They wait for their turn to enter the temple.

The complexities of the ceremony were lost on me. I had tried but failed before to come to grips with the multitude of gods worshipped in Balinese Hinduism. However, as a spectacle it is unfussy and simple.

A percussion orchestra starts up and people sit on the ground under a canopy. On the edges, children play while older men and women sit on chairs and look on. Prayers are said and women take offerings to the altar. Holy water is sprinkled. After half an hour, it is over. The orchestra stops playing and people file out to make their way back to their motor-cycles and home.

Bali is a crowded island and undeniably a busy tourist resort. Those who demand complete peace and quiet now head off to the next-door island of Lombok, where tourist infrastructure remains, so far, minimal. However, getting off the beaten track and seeing something different in Bali is not impossible.

This is particularly so at the moment. The political unrest that swept Indonesia this year spread in a small way to Bali during my stay. Students demonstrated in Denpasar, its capital, as they did throughout the country. Resentment at the former government was clear.

Such turmoil was low-key compared with mainland Indonesia and the island remained a safe place to visit. Yet that has not stopped many potential visitors going elsewhere out of caution, leaving the island quieter than normal.

This, along with the collapse of the value of the local rupiah, is bad news for those who work in the tourist industry. It is, however, quite the opposite for those flying in.

Financial Times Syndication

Stormy? Even the stuffed stag was queasy

Bill Glenton has a rough time in the Hebrides on a sea-going version of a country house hotel

THIS ROAD to the isles was giving us a really rough ride. One moment it was a high road and the next a sickeningly low one as our ship bucked like a stallion bitten by a horsefly.

Far from "gliding majestically", as promised in the glossy brochure, those hardy enough to leave their beds were staggering like drunken sailors on this unusually stormy June day. Even the mounted stag's head in this sea-going version of an "elegant country house hotel" looked queasy.

The galley and the chef were out of action and, even if some could have appreciated the "house cuisine", they had to make do with soup and beef sandwiches. Our emergency lunch was accompanied by the sound of wine bottles smashing as the ship did the corkscrewing.

Rough weather is one of those unpredictable hazards when cruising, but one does not usually find a small, 2,112 ton, former inshore ferry boldly sailing into the deep, often storm-tossed Atlantic. Nor towards such a remote outpost of the British Isles as St Kilda.

However, there is no other cruise ship like the Hebridean Princess or one with its special cruise routes. Completely refurbished into a smart, floating notion of a traditional rural hostelry, she spends most of her spring-to-autumn season sailing around the Scottish isles.

This former Caledonian Macbrayne Inner Hebrides ferry normally cruises within more sheltered waters but, once a year, heads out to try to land up to 30 passengers on St Kilda. Described by the very hardy population more than 60 years ago, the island became a missile tracking station for the armed forces.

Landing at the tiny, exposed harbour has never been easy, although, occasionally, possible. In this gale, with angry waves lashing the grim, steep cliffs, it would have been suicidal. Just steaming near the island almost called for Captain Brian Larcombe's former experience as a Royal Navy submariner.

Yet he successfully navigated the small ship close to Hirta, the main island, and its towering, 600ft rock stacks, so that we could see the high-rise accommodation for millions of seabirds. At times, the sky was as white with gannets and gulls as the sea was with white horses.

As compellingly awesome as this rare experience was, it did not quite match the relief of many as we, at last, lurched our way slowly back to more calmer waters in the lee of the Outer Hebrides.



History and scenic beauty on the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides

Anchored, as the ship often was on this week-long voyage, and in calm sea, we could once more relish the comforts of this unusual vessel. What it lacks in size, public rooms and entertainment, it makes up for in top-grade accommodation, first-class service more than one crew member to two passengers and tasty meals.

In spite of the ship's outward appearance, reminding one of its former role as a ferry, inwardly it has a strong resemblance to the chintzy armchair and potted palm atmosphere of a country hideaway for the well-heeled. Spacious cabins have comfortable beds, gleaming woodwork, soft carpeting, ample wardrobes and drawer space, and richly brocaded curtains.

The private bathrooms are as large as those in any range of shampoos and lotions. Other cabin amenities include a trouser-press, ironing board, iron, hairdryer and satellite television.

There is just one lounge, which is richly awash in deep armchairs and settees. The small bar is open all day. The country house theme is extended to the compact library, complete with leather armchairs, and two small conservatory-style observation rooms.

There is room for everyone at a single sitting in the restaurant, a rarity on most cruise ships, mostly with tables for two.

The wet and windy conditions we suffered put the limited covered accommodation to the test. Strolling on the open, wooden decks was another testing challenge and sitting out on them more suitable for hardened anglers. An attempt to create a shooting party atmosphere by staging a clay pigeon shoot had the gulls screaming more in

laughter than fear.

Such setbacks, however, seemed to be accepted with stoicism, even cheerfully, by many of the passengers. Perhaps it was because nearly all were bred in those sterner times when Britain ruled the waves. Their average age was over 65 and a few were in their 80s. This was typical of the cruises, according to Andrew Quarrie, the chief purser, who said that on one trip there was a centenarian.

It did not need the display of magazines such as *Country Life*, *The Lady*, *Homes and Gardens* and *Vogue* on the coffee tables to confirm that the majority of my shipmates belonged to the same middle-class echelon. As well as many retired professionals, they included a former high sheriff, a former chairman of a big chocolate company, a few of what used to be called the landed gentry, and well-to-do widows.

A good number had cruised on the Hebridean Princess before, often several times. Repeat traffic often accounts for 60 per cent of the customers. Such a high percentage makes the ship as much an exclusive floating club as country house hotel. The scene at Oban, the point of embarkation, was more like a public school old boys' and girls' reunion or regimental get-together.

High-pitched voices raised in recognition matched the cry of the gulls over the fish pier.

Stepping aboard, I realised this was going to be a cruise where I would need to keep my end up carefully for more reasons than stormy weather. I was relieved I had had second thoughts about leaving my black tie at home. The Hebrides might not be as remote as some of those wild outposts of Empire but the same rigid rules

about dressing for dinner were clearly going to be observed.

Choppy weather certainly did not stop almost all passengers appearing in dinner jackets or long dresses on formal nights. Thankfully, the days at sea and sightseeing ashore were in casual wear with raincoats and thick jumpers de rigueur. Sensibly, the ship supplies waterproofs and wellies for rougher landings from the small boats.

With the bad weather making such adventures doubly hazardous, the ship kept mainly to harbours where we could land at jetties. First call was the holy island of Iona more than ever a place of pilgrimage today, with some visitors as eager to see the simple grave of John Smith, the former British Labour party leader, as St Columba's Abbey. For me, an unexpected highlight was hearing that rare bird, the comcraque.

These shy, croaky creatures are becoming more common in the Hebrides. At the next island, Barra, I learnt there are now as many as 60. But the winged attraction there is the beach. To prove its firmness the driver of our small tour bus drove us across it with never a lurch.

It was certainly a smoother ride than along the narrow, twisty roads on Harris. One expects it to be an island but it is separated from Lewis by only a tiny stone bridge. Nothing, we discovered, separates the Harris Tweed, made in both parts. Its manufacture is still a thriving cottage industry, although much of the local prosperity now comes from exporting shellfish. From this most distant British island, container lorries now carry prawns and lobsters to Spain and Italy.

Financial Times Syndication



The wonderful island of Bali has a lot more to offer the visitor than beach resorts

taste

the
pueas

AUGUST 1998

A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for
The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

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Universal faiths meet a global economic system

Religion's dilemma: to shake or shun the invisible hand

► With all the world a market, the compasses that guide many major religions are feeling the pull of 'economic north.' For some, this means a few minor adjustments to their course. For others, it sets the compass spinning wildly and unpredictably

By Joel Kotkin

NEARLY A century has passed since German sociologist Max Weber first explored the interrelationship between religion and capitalism. His observations remain strikingly relevant today.

At the core of all the faiths that Weber identified as well-equipped to flourish in a capitalist environment lie three critical factors:

► A belief in individual responsibility;
► A commitment to education and the development of the intellect;

► "A vocation of uniqueness," the term coined by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Mormons, Jews, the British of the 19th Century, contemporary Chinese and Jains all consider themselves special and apart from other groups. Even in contemporary America young Jews are not expected to perform merely to the standards of the overall society; they are expected, even compelled, by familial tradition to achieve well beyond such norms.

In Weber's day the primary focus was on the religions that he knew as critical to the capitalist ethos—Judaism and Protestant Christianity. Yet if Weber lived today, his focus would no doubt extend well beyond these two faiths to a host of others, including Mormons, Asian neo-Confucianists and selected Indian sects such as Jains. All these faiths have created dynamic economic cultures reinforced by a sub-structure of practices and beliefs.

The traditions identified by Weber are particularly critical in today's information-driven society. Jews, Chinese and Mormons all have college graduation rates well above other groups. Mormon Utah, for instance, has ranked first among US states for a generation in terms of median years of education, college test scores and literacy. In this respect, they are simply following the precepts of their own religion, which identifies divinity directly with the perfection of human knowledge. "The glory of God," states the Mormon Doctrine and Covenant, "is intelligence."

Similarly, Asians, mostly from the neo-Confucianist cultures of China, Japan or Korea, account for more students at the University of California campuses than Anglos despite representing only 10 percent of the state's population. Even attempts to reform California's racial preference system to one based on incomes has done little to change this "over-representation," since poor Asians consistently outscore middle class African-Americans, Latinos and Anglos.

The tremendous emphasis on individual achievement also plays a role in the success of these faiths. In the Talmud, indeed throughout Jewish tradition, there has been an enormous stress laid on the responsibility—and moral culpability—of the individual. Man, the Talmud suggests, is not intended to live without responsibility for his community; he must make

every effort to succeed in order not to burden the greater society.

Similarly, in looking at the success of 19th Century Britain, the great French observer Alexis de Tocqueville

saw clearly that it was the religion-fueled, individualist culture of Protestantism that impelled the remarkable growth

both of Great Britain and its offspring, the US. "I am in no hurry to inquire whether nature has scooped out ports for him and given him coal and iron," de Tocqueville wrote of France's cross-channel rivals. "The reasons for his commercial success are not there at all: it is in himself."

Far from Europe, the Chinese were developing their own model of individualistic achievement. As they settled in the European colonies of East Asia—Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam—the local Chinese brought with them their Confucianist values with their

emphasis on education, filial and group virtues. In the process, observes Hong Kong sociologist Ambrose King, they developed a "culture of rationalistic traditionalism" that helped them adapt to the dominant European capitalist order.

These experiences contrast markedly with other, more collectivist belief systems, such as Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Shi'a Muslim. To a large extent, these groups have struggled to successfully accommodate global capitalism with their core beliefs. Although these cultures have produced some of the world's great art, poetry, music and philosophy, they have lagged in terms of capitalist development; they do not dominate key industries like mass media, investment banking or high-technology in the way Jews, Asians and Anglo-Saxon Protestants have done.

Success, of course, is not without its risks. In both North American and Eu-

► SHAKE OR SHUN NEXT PAGE



If a camel can do it: the Aga Khan being ritually weighed in diamonds at a 1946 ceremony. The monetary value of the diamonds was subsequently donated to charity

BELIEVERS, NON-BELIEVERS The 10 largest in terms of adherents

BELIEFS	WORLDWIDE TOTAL
Christians	1,955,229,000
Atheists	1,782,809,000
Muslims	1,126,325,000
Nonreligious	886,928,500
Hindus	793,075,000
Buddhists	325,275,000
Chinese folk religions	220,971,000
New-Religionists	106,015,000
Sikhs	19,508,000
Jews	13,866,000

Christianity has dealt with 'eye-of-the needle' issues for 2,000 years

Saint Paul the rock upon which globalization is built

By Daniel Samper

BEFORE ADAM SMITH, Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan—in fact, before anyone else—Christianity was in favor of globalization.

The basis for this claim was laid 2,000 years ago, and while the architect was a young man from Nazareth called Jesus Christ, the one who really applied his universalistic ideas was a peculiar character worshiped nowadays by the Catholic Church as Saint Paul.

Over time, the apostles who accompanied Christ have been fixed in the popular imagination as poor, humble and ignorant—simple fishermen and the like who were the complete antithesis of the globally-oriented businessman. But St. Paul, whose name has been adopted by several Popes (including the present one), does not fit this profile at all.

The future spreader of Christianity was born in the year 4 BC, part of a well-off and ultra-

conservative family from Galilee that moved to Tarsus at the time of its occupation by Rome. There, Saul (his original name) and his family became Roman citizens and amassed a great fortune. The family's specialty was sewing and selling tents, and this economic bonanza allowed Saul to travel and acquire an education. He spoke Greek and Aramaic, and was well versed in the Hebrew sacred books.

Saul studied in Jerusalem, a city often visited by Christ. However, nothing suggests that they ever met. Indeed, and in his youth Saul was fanatically anti-Christian. It is known that he witnessed the torture and death of St. Sebas-

tian, one of the first martyrs of the church, and some even think that he was involved in the crime. When, in the year 32 or 33, Saul underwent a sudden conversion on the road to Damascus to the creed he hated, Christ was already dead or had only a few months to live.

After his conversion, Saul joined the cause of his old enemies and worked tirelessly to spread the Christian message. "Paul, more than any other man, is responsible for [Christianity's] transformation from a Jewish sect into a world religion," states historian Michael H. Hart.

Identified by his new Greek name, Paul spent the next 16 years crisscrossing the cultural and political universe of his time, what today is Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus and Israel. During his travels he preached to disciples, charmed followers, argued with

opponents, debated with philosophers and wrote dozens of letters to friends and communities.

It was not an easy life. He was jailed several times. Once, the house where he was staying in was assaulted by fanatics; another time he managed to flee from danger hidden in a basket. He visited Spain, and have ended up in a Roman circus complete with wild animals—no body knows how he managed to get out in one piece. And he died in Rome, executed after a Kafka-like process, in the year 64.

Paul was the Christian Internet of the first century. He transmitted his enthusiasm to some of his friends, like Silas and Barnabas, who also took to the roads to spread the doctrine. When he considered it necessary, he challenged the law. He preached about a multitude of themes, from theology to sexuality.

Paul's work has been described in many ways, from universalist militancy to ecumenical idealism. In the first century the city of Tarsus, located in what is now Turkey, was the Athens of Asia Minor: a meeting place of cultures, beliefs and all types of merchandise. There, with little or no conflict, Eastern and Western religions and people of all origins lived together. It was a sort of a global village, fueled by commerce. Paul was a product of that diversity.

"Thanks to Paul, two global Christian premises were well established," writes Paul Johns, author of *A History of Christianity*. "First, universal redemption (Christ opened the gates of Heaven to all human beings). Second, the universal value of his ideas."

The tenacious Paul understood the latter and fostered travelling missions to spread the faith. He himself was the first missionary. So, since the beginning, the Catholic Church sent conquerors of souls to the entire world. In

this, Pope John Paul II is more Paul than John.

Aside from ideas, many practical aspects of marketing overseas were developed by Paul. Church celibacy, for example, is not just a matter of spirit over flesh, but also a financial issue. In the 19th century, Catholic and Protestant missions were competing fiercely for the souls of the infidels, but the Catholics had an important advantage. Since their envoys were single, their sustenance was about

20 times cheaper than the stipend of a Protestant missionary with his wife and children. In 1930 a Catholic missionary cost UK£35 a year to support in the field compared to £650 for a Protestant one.

Committed to travel and universal concepts, the Church that grew on Paul's foundations always viewed commerce as an ally. In the galleons that transported European soldiers to the New World there was always a priest. The search for raw materials and markets in Asia and Africa was also the path for the penetration of the Cross.

It is true that Christ said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. But the Catholic Church has not interpreted this as an injunction against making money. Instead, it has viewed it as a call to distribute it better. If you shrink the camel and sufficiently expand the eye of the needle, God and mammon can coexist. ☺

DANIEL SAMPER is a *WorldPaper* ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR WESTERN EUROPE.



Portrait of globalist: Pope John Paul has followed in the well-traveled footsteps of his namesake, St Paul

JOEL KOTKIN IS THE AUTHOR OF *Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy* AND A SENIOR FELLOW AT THE PEPPERDINE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY.

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Iran's clerics stumble along righteous path to growth

Islamic economics buys power at the cost of alienating the young

By Mansour Farhang

IN A RECENT speech before a group of public officials in Tehran, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami startled his audience by telling them that "Our economy is sick. We must find a remedy for joblessness."

The officials were not startled by the news; the country's 25 percent unemployment rate and grim economic picture are well known. But the directness of the statement, shorn of the usual euphemisms that characterize clerical discourse in Iran, shocked them and attracted the attention of the local press. Khatami's lucidity made his statement newsworthy.

To appreciate the irony of this, think back to 1979 when Iran's Islamic revolution burst onto the world stage. At the time, the maximum leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was dismissive of Iran's economic condition. He was far more interested in veiling the country's women than in responding to the material aspirations of the Iranian people.

Once, when asked to endorse an anti-inflation policy, the Ayatollah became irritated, saying: "We did not make a revolution to lower the price of watermelon." Another time, in response to an inquiry about his views on economic issues, he replied that, "economics is for donkeys."

However, Khomeini's contempt for economics did not prevent his clerical lieutenants from promising material prosperity for all Iranians, particularly the urban poor and lower middle classes whose support for the theocracy was deemed indispensable. Thus, during the first decade of the revolution—while Khomeini was alive and his authority

uncontested—the spokesmen for the Islamic regime declared both capitalism and socialism corrupt and proclaimed Islamic economics as the only righteous path to growth and equity.

The problem with this position was that nobody knew what it involved. It was very unclear how Islamic economics differed from the free markets of the West and state-controlled systems of the Soviet bloc countries.

Iran's Islamic leaders associated their economic order with social justice and prohibition against usury, hoarding and monopoly, but they offered virtually nothing that economists could consider new or novel. What actually happened under the guise of Islamic economics was conventional government takeover, through expropriation and nationalization, of large sectors of the national economy. This helped Iran's clerical

rulers to tighten their grip on the society, but it was an unmitigated disaster for the vast majority of Iranians. The rich with connections to clerical rulers benefited from government contracts and monopolistic control of foreign trade, but the middle and working classes saw their income drop sharply.

Today, there is a greater concentration of wealth in Iran than ever before. With one worker in four unemployed and an annual inflation rate of at least 30 percent, there is little sign that this long-term decline in the standard of living is bottoming out.

Another factor that has seriously aggravated the country's economic situation is rapid population growth. Khomeini was opposed to birth control and, like China's Mao Tse-tung, saw the international advocacy of family



If only economics were governed by the same laws as soccer: Iran's 2-1 victory over the US in this year's World Cup tournament provided the country with something to cheer about, but two decades of 'Islamic economics' and demonizing Western culture have left the faithful either unemployed or struggling to make do with less

planning as a Western plot against the world's downtrodden. Consequently, Iran's population has been nearly doubled since 1979, from 35 to 65 million.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, the Islamic regime reversed its population policy and began to provide married couples, particularly in rural areas, with condoms, birth control pills and advice. Nevertheless, the population is still growing by about 4 percent annually, in part because of a creditable achievement by the Islamic republic—the reduction of infant mortality from 104 deaths per 1,000 births to 25 per 1,000.

The government has also made some progress in educating its growing

population. Literacy has increased. Despite the acute shortages of teachers and classrooms, the number of students in primary schools has been increased from 7 to 19 million; in the universities, from 100,000 to more than a million.

The increase in the size of the student population is likely to have dramatic consequences for the Iranian political order. Unemployment among 16 to 25-year-olds is double the national average, and the composition of recent demonstrations in Tehran make it evident that the clerical regime is being challenged by frustrated youths, particularly the university students who have little faith in the regime's ability to improve eco-

nomic opportunity for the growing number of job-seeking graduates.

Meeting this challenge poses a problem for the ruling elite. In contrast to their official position on materialism and capitalism, they have a lot to lose. As a result, conventional strategies for dealing with economic stagnation—liberalization, deregulation, privatization, devaluation and cutting subsidies—can seriously hurt the vested interests of the

compared the Iranian clerics who control the *bonyads* with the Soviet Communist Party's apparatchiks or the cronies of former Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos.

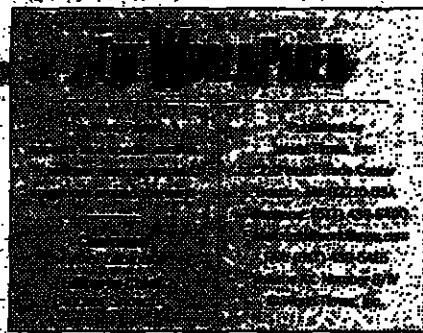
Khatami has advocated reducing the government's role in the economy, and the technocrats of his cabinet periodically talk about the need to eliminate the \$12 billion in state subsidies—an amount equivalent to Iran's projected oil revenues for 1998. However, the supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and other influential clerics are—for obvious reasons—opposed to such reforms.

So far they have been able to assert their power, but they are finding it increasingly difficult to defend the status quo. About 60 percent of Iran's population is younger than 25, which means most were either small children or not yet born when the Islamic republic was established. Therefore, the ruling clerics cannot explain away the youths' frustrations and deprivations by blaming the practices of the pre-revolutionary regime.

In short, the deepening economic problems of Iran are slowly but surely causing a serious political crisis for the regime. The high-sounding religious rhetoric of the past two decades has lost, at least in the economic realm, all credibility and effectiveness.

The evidence suggests that some members of Iran's clerical hierarchy have come to realize that the challenge facing them today has less to do with religious purity than with money and jobs. Therefore, they want to forget the moral confrontation with the "Great Satan" and begin the task of convincing US President Bill Clinton to lift economic sanctions. But the price may be the "divine right" of the ayatollahs to rule Iran. □

MANSOUR FARHANG, A SPECIALIST IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF IRAN, IS CURRENTLY TEACHING AT BENNINGTON COLLEGE IN VERMONT.



SHAKE OR SHUN

Continued from previous page

European cities the economically successful religious/ethnic minorities—Protestant Koreans, Chinese, Indians—have become targets both for white racists as well as angry African Americans. In 1990, Asian males in Los Angeles were more than twice as likely to be self-employed as their African-American counterparts, four times as likely to be engineers and 10 times more likely to work as accountants. The fact that most of these Asian are themselves immigrants, or sons of immigrants, often serves only to increase the resentment by less successful, native born populations.

In developed countries, however, such minorities have shown the ability to

move from their often precarious "middle man" minority status to a more comfortable perch in the information age economy within a single generation. Protected by the constitutional order, they frequently integrate successfully—and even assume leadership positions—within their adopted countries. Inter-marriage, predominately to whites, will likely help these groups integrate into the upper-class mainstream; a third of native born Asians in Los Angeles and 15 percent of immigrants marry outside the group, far more than whites, immigrant Latinos or African-Americans.

But the price of religious and ethnic-based achievement can be far higher in less developed countries. Asian Indians in Uganda, for example, became prime targets under the Africanist regime of Idi

Amin. Growing tensions with the newly enfranchised Africans also threaten Indians in South Africa, despite generations of common suffering under apartheid. Jews remain open targets in Latin countries such as Argentina, where they are often blamed for economic troubles.

This pattern can be seen all too clearly in depression-plagued Indonesia to-

day, where Chinese account for a bare 5 percent of the population but control some 75 percent of assets. When the Indonesian economy collapsed, it was the Chinese who were blamed, their stores looted and women raped. At the same time the leader of the Muslim opposition to the deposed dictator General Suharto, Amien Rais, has openly called for

curbs on both Chinese and Jewish economic power.

Similarly Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammed, in trying to explain away his country's economic downturn, was quick to lay the blame at the foot of "currency speculators," many of whom he identified with Jewish entrepreneurs.

Such phenomena suggests that these

some from these flourishing ethnic and religious groups may continue, like archetypal "wandering Jew," to seek out new homes more amenable to their talents. In the process they may lose cherished possessions and adopted cultural traits, but those nations tolerant and fortunate enough to attract them will prove the greater beneficiaries. □

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A prayer for education: religions that revere the pursuit of knowledge do well in the global economy

The elderly

The forgotten generation



By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

THERE IS no doubt that everyone of us has walked down or has driven along Garden Street, eyeing the windows of supermarkets, novelty shops and glamorous jewelry boutiques. What you probably won't have noticed, however, is one ordinary building, without commercial signs, or gloomy lighting. There are no clients or businessmen here, and you won't find anything to wear or buy. What you will find is more precious and sacred—human love and care.

The Missionaries of Charity Institution established by the late Mother Teresa is a place of refuge for old people who have been rejected by their families and society.

It is somehow ironic to find a home for the elderly amongst all this materialism. Abandoned people living the rest of their lives in a place few would recognize or visit. There are 70 old men and women living here. Most of them are disabled and homeless people who have nowhere else to go.

The nun in charge of the institution told The Star that there are cases where families refuse to visit their dying relatives in the institution. "When a patient is dying, we try to contact his or her family and some refuse to come." There are many reasons why some families abandon their elderly relatives. Sometimes it is a matter of money and sometimes it is psychological. Some can't afford medical treatment for their elderly parents or grandparents. Money isn't always the issue, however, and there are in fact a few patients at the institution who come from rich families.

Sometimes a family is simply fed up with having a disabled person to tend to in the house. In addition, there are a number of abandoned divorcees, mostly old women, who have been kicked out of their homes. Some families even refuse to bury the corpses of their old relatives, leaving it entirely to the institution.

The number of neglected people coming to the institution is on the rise.

Some families looking for a place to put their elderly relatives fail to recognize the difference between an old people's home and a hotel. "We have families who come here expecting to find private rooms for their elderly relatives," the nun continued. Of course, there is no hotel service—finances are scarce. The nun in charge pointed out that the only support they get is from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Other financial aid is rare. Conditions are basic; all patients share the same facilities including bathrooms. Hygiene is a problem, not helped by the recent water crisis.

Nevertheless, at this institution these people receive what their own families have failed to offer—love and care. Although there is little doubt that most of these elderly citizens gave everything they could to their children, they have received nothing but disrespect and neglect in return.

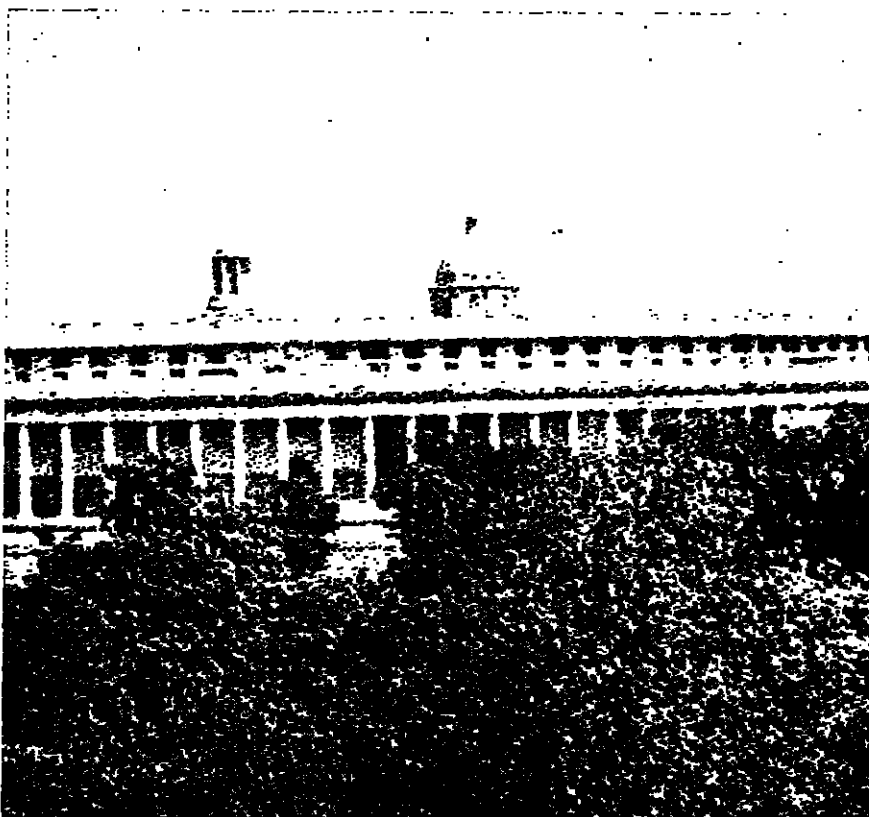
It is a sad reflection on our society that young people are neglecting to care for their elderly relatives. Just as sad, however, is the fact that society is neglecting these homes, which are obviously needed. It is not only the elderly who are suffering, of course. Mentally and physically handicapped people, as well as orphans, are also seriously neglected in our modern "get-ahead" society.

Young people currently make up the majority of Jordan's population, and caring for the elderly no longer seems to feature highly on society's agenda. Those who callously or thoughtlessly believe that there is no need to make special provision for our elderly citizens may not be so blasé about this issue when they themselves reach their twilight years.

In the meantime, why not take another walk down Garden Street. Enjoy the buzzing markets and the novelty shops, but this time try and spot the ordinary place where extraordinary people are striving to make this a better world. If you get lost, ask a fellow passer-by. But don't be surprised if nobody stops to help you—neglect is something we all are having to get used to these days. ■

An Indian freedom fighter

Vishwanath Mathur, who was jailed for pursuing Indian independence, talks to Amy Louise Kazmin



The Indian Parliament building, New Delhi

VISHWANATH MATHUR asked if we could eat at the Captain's Cabin, an expensive fish restaurant in one of New Delhi's five-star hotels. "We are very fond of the seafood," he said. Then, citing his poor vision and weak grip, he asked if he could bring an assistant.

"Sure," I said.

"Good," he replied. "I'll bring my son."

The former freedom fighter and communist had giggled when I said I wanted him to tell me about his role in India's independence movement and his views on today's India over lunch at the restaurant of his choice.

"That's very kind of you. But we can talk anywhere."

But when I insisted he select his favourite place in town, the 86-year-old leftist rebel made his choice.

When I arrive punctually, at one o'clock, Mathur, a tall, slim man, and his son are already settled into a booth in the dark, wood-paneled restaurant, sipping Kingfisher beers.

Mathur was 17 in 1930, when his high school was shut down by the British. So he enrolled as a Congress volunteer and was sent to picket stores selling foreign goods. Within two weeks, he was arrested and sentenced to three months in jail—and so began a political odyssey in which Mathur allied himself with leftists, and searched India for "revolvers" with which to fight the British.

This was no Gandhian response. Mathur robbed two postal couriers in broad daylight to get money for arms and planned to assassinate a government official in Benares. His plot was thwarted when he was arrested again, carrying a loaded gun. Twenty years old, he was convicted of "conspiracy to wage war against the king" and was sentenced to seven years in prison.

In total, Mathur has spent 13 years behind bars, including four in the notorious Andaman Cellular jail, for anti-British political activities. He watched friends go to the gallows, and saw others die in hunger strikes demanding better jail conditions.

He takes a sip of beer—it's slightly surprising since many Indians of Mathur's vintage frown on drink. A pianist is playing, fake fishing nets are hung around the place. It is an odd venue to discuss India's freedom from foreign domination, which was secured 51 years ago last week.

Worried that my elderly guest may be hungry, I suggest we order immediately. Since he cannot see too well, Mathur's son assists. The senior Mathur will have a lobster, shelled please; Mathur junior, head of his own information technology company, will have prawns Newburg. I get closest to Indian food, choosing Goa fish curry.

The former freedom fighter reminisces. When he was a boy in Benares, his grandmother took him daily for a purifying ritual dip in the Ganges River, which is sacred to Hindus, the place where they scatter the ashes of their dead. But watching the priests and worshippers during his daily dips, Mathur says, he developed a "hatred" for the priests. I ask why.

"Just pushing, not caring. Insulting, asking for more money," he says. "Sometimes, if they would see a young lady, their behaviour was very bad."

At the age of 12, he says, he deliberately stepped on an idol of the deity Hanuman to see whether he would be punished. Nothing happened that night, he says, nibbling at the bread. Later, he smashed an idol. With it were shattered the last traces of his religious faith.

Mathur was drawn to the independence movement by the fierce nationalism of his teachers, and visits to his school from the "high command" of the Indian National Congress. In 1928, aged 15, he and some friends scaled the walls of their boarding school and ran all night to reach a train station where Mohandas K. Gandhi was passing through.

The boys pressed oranges into Gandhi's hands. "We said, 'We have come to see you.' He inquired whether we had permission to come. We said, 'No.' He

was angry, and said, 'That's very bad.' He didn't like indiscipline. Mahatma Gandhi was very much a strict disciplinarian."

The lobster and other food arrives as Mathur is telling me about his first spell in jail. Prisoners' hair was cut arbitrarily; inmates were caged for singing nationalist songs; and once a week, the insides of the inmates' lower lips were inspected to check they were not using tobacco.

Mathur pulls on his lower lip, showing how it was done. "It was very insulting," he says. We tuck into the meal.

He goes on to describe his initiation into the Hindustani Socialist Republican Association, at the cremation grounds on the banks of the Ganges. Approaching the meeting spot, in the small hours, he saw a corpse hover above the ground. Then he realised that the body was being lifted by bamboo sticks held by his friends. It was a test, devised to ensure he would not be easily frightened.

After initiation, he and his comrades sent letters to British district officials, warning them to leave or die. He says he continued to respect the Congress leaders, but saw little merit in the methods they advocated.

"All along, we would hear about non-violence. But we all laughed. It was not practical," he says.

I ask Mathur what kind of India he thought he was fighting for when he was robbing postal workers. Initially, he said, he had "no clear conception of free India." He only knew they wanted foreigners out.

Later, as his leftist politics crystallised in jail, he says, "we were imagining an India where the common people will have jobs, shelter, houses to live, no problem of food, a very good education, and health services, so that the country could develop industrially."

Independence found Mathur, by then a communist, travelling among peasants and workers, trying to explain to them that the mere departure of the British was a "false independence, a deal between the government of India and the Indian bourgeoisie." But, he admits, "it was very difficult to persuade the people. His efforts earned him another six months in jail, this time under a free Indian government."

And what of India today, 51 years after independence? "We are disappointed," he says, particularly at the rise of the Bharatiya Janata party. He shakes his head sadly: "I never could have imagined this type of government."

Though never an advocate of non-violence, he dismisses the BJP's nuclear tests as "a typical jingoistic policy. They want to divert the attention of the people from the bread problem, from the real problem of life, from the water problem, power problem."

Mathur praises the liberalisation policy, and says it was needed sooner. Yet, with a lack of consistency, he blames capitalism for inequitable distribution of wealth.

Our plates are cleared. Coffee is brought. The root of India's problem, Mathur says, is that it remains in the grip of religious superstition, which means Hindu caste loyalties are crucial in politics.

And that is why Mathur says he feels his job as a freedom fighter is not yet done. "My fight, personally speaking, it will go on even after my death. My son and daughters, they have to fight," he says. "We have to fight for re-education of our people. Fight to develop a scientific-mind approach towards social problems—not what is called mystic or religious and all that. That is the only guarantee that will bring good people into power," he goes on.

This impassioned outburst seems a fitting end to our conversation, but I have one last question. It is rude, I know, but I cannot resist. "Sir," I say, "do you think it's right for a communist to eat lobster?"

Mathur breaks into a wide grin, and giggles a bit. "Are we not human?" he asks. Then he and his son take their leave, and I am left to settle the bill. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Dreaming the impossible dream a NASA reality

By Ellen Gamerman

WASHINGTON—John Mankins' government career can be traced through the drawings on his office walls: a rocket whizzing into outer space, a glittering moon colony, a giant bug-like contraption fueling a spacecraft in interstellar darkness.

Crazy ideas? Not to Mankins. In his job at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, he is paid to come up with concepts so far-out they sometimes only get laughed at. Consider him one of NASA's sci-fi guys.

"I try to be reasonably conservative with my ideas," Mankins says, looking as though he has just come through a brain storm, with his rumpled hair and government ID dangling askew. "Nobody believes that."

Later, he adds, "There are people out there who think I'm nuts."

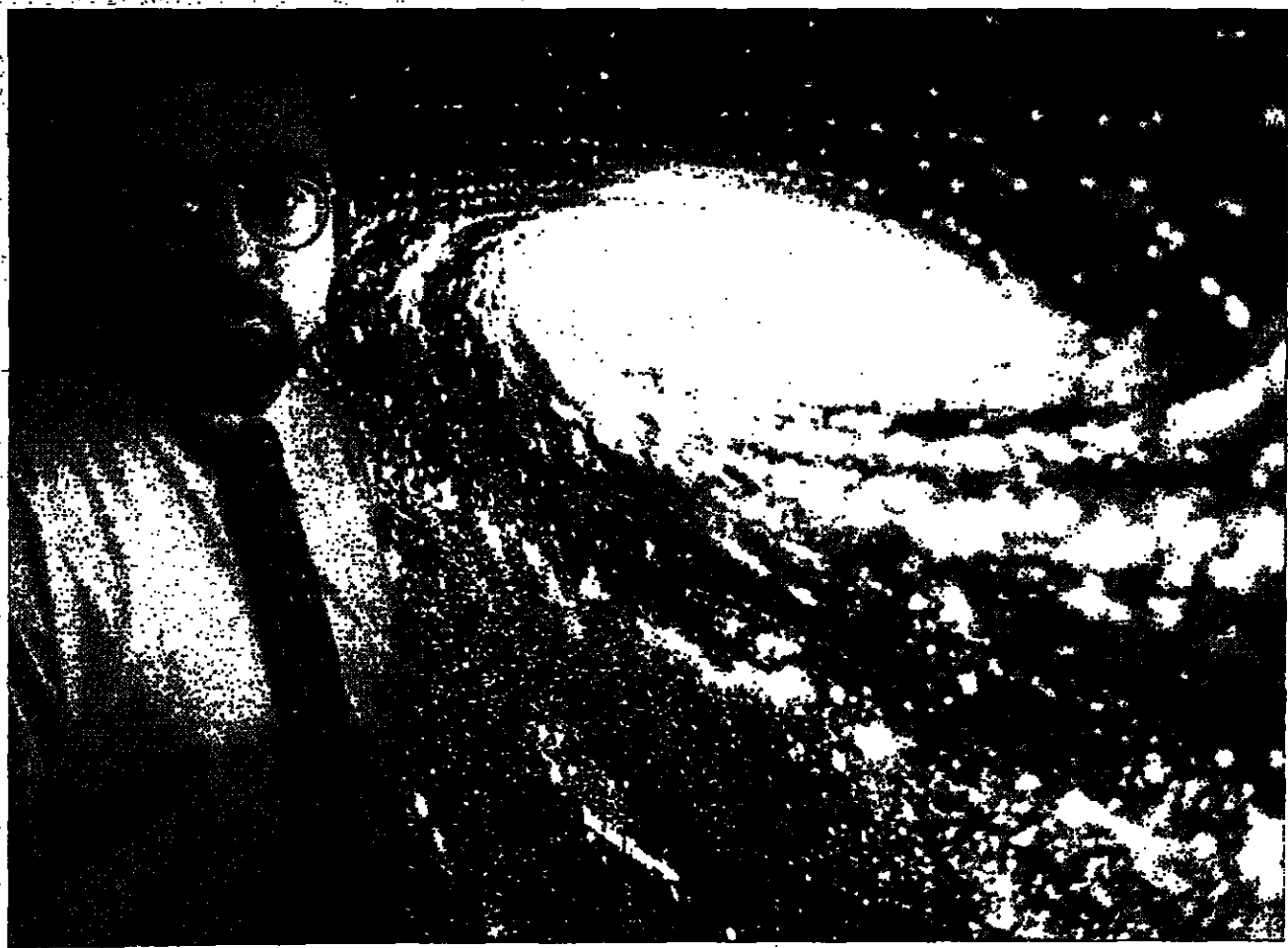
Mankins, 42, is one of the government's roughly two dozen researchers responsible for dreaming up futuristic ideas for human space exploration and development. At best, his eureka moments might shape the next century. At worst, his far-reaching visions could fall into NASA's own black hole, forever ignored. More likely, the outcome will be a little of both.

Day after day, Mankins combines sophisticated scientific theory with fanciful imagination to churn out ideas that look to the outsider like the government version of a "Star Trek" set. "I've stopped reading most science fiction," Mankins sighs. "It's too much like talking shop."

It is lonely work. Recently, Mankins finished a nearly two-year study about outer-space tourism, geared toward persuading families to vacation in lower-Earth orbit instead of, say, in Orlando. The study, set far in the future, caused barely a ripple in the mainstream media. The report opened with the words "carpe diem." Not many in the mainstream did.

Mankins, a physicist who went to NASA 11 years ago after working at the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, Calif., says obscurity is not always a bad thing.

If his tourism study had stirred splashy publicity, "it would have gotten a lot more criticism from people who didn't believe it could happen," he says. So far, none of Mankins' big ideas—including his proposal for space theme parks and orbiting hotels—has been adopted. Still, he believes some



John Mankins, 42, is one of the government's roughly two dozen researchers responsible for dreaming up futuristic ideas for human space exploration and development. Photo by Larry C. Price.

will in his career, despite those who doubt.

In this line of work, "the giggle factor" is just part of the job.

"It's sort of a compliment when people call you crazy," says Whit Brantley, a colleague of Mankins who directs the advanced systems and technology office at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. "A lot of people before us have been called that, and they turned out to have good ideas that were later appreciated."

Brantley cites Galileo, who was just about tarred and feathered in the 17th century after arguing that the Earth was not at the center of the universe. A century ago, Nikola Tesla was ridiculed for his work on long-distance power transmission and his proposal that all electrical power be free. The fights go on, Brantley says, "and it gets downright blood-curdling sometimes."

As for Mankins, he did not take the \$101,000-a-year job for controversy—rather, he finds it the perfect pursuit for a self-described "space cadet" who grew a goatee long before

it was considered cool. A California native who has a master's degree in physics from Harvey Mudd College—a science and engineering school near Los Angeles—he came of age in Santa Maria, Calif., pressing his nose to the television screen any time there was a rocket launch.

In conversations with non-scientists, Mankins drops the complex aerospace terminology and relies mostly on intergalactic-themed TV shows to describe his line of work. "In Star Trek Voyager there was an alien race called the Borgs—this was much bigger than one of the Borg mother ships," Mankins says, talking about an old NASA idea for a space factory. "Did you see Babylon 5? It was much bigger than (the space station) Babylon 5."

Mankins looks everywhere for ideas—not just in serious scientific tomes. He knows what time and channel all the best space-travel television shows are on, tapes quotes from his favorite German mathematician on his office walls and scribbles brainstorm ideas on an erasable board in

purple pen.

Sometimes, inspiration comes from the most unlikely places.

Take the design for his proposed Sun Tower, a series of solar panels that would beam power back to Earth from a spot in outer space. Mankins dreamed it up one afternoon as he stared into a Disney Genie while his young daughter, Willa, was being changed. There, in the Disney storage unit, he saw the idea—identical pieces interlocking to form a stack of plastic diaper bags.

"I kept looking at how the inserts were plugged together," he said. "It was a flash."

He realized that the same concept could be used for his tower, which would assemble itself using identical sections meant to interlock after reaching space. Using a similar contraption, he also envisions spacecraft hooking up and refueling at a solar-generated power station in mid-flight.

But these are vastly expensive ideas, and in this field, money is nearly as elusive as space dust. "People are always interested in new ideas and find them exciting," Brantley

says. "It's only when it competes with their budget that they become reluctant."

NASA wins praise from researchers for supporting futuristic studies, though the advanced projects office for space flight receives only \$10 million of NASA's \$13.6 billion budget.

These days, Mankins is working on a way to use the moon as a launch site for interstellar voyages. He also developed an idea to use a high-tech angled slingshot, instead of a launch pad, to hurl spacecraft from Earth. And he is eager to see NASA plan colonies at the North or South poles, with more constant sunlight.

Mankins hopes he will see his concepts

in space during his lifetime. He knows plenty has to happen first, but he has reason to be optimistic.

"I have a grandfather five generations removed who lived to be 111 years old," he says. "So I've got another 70 years... at least."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Note of success in Zerqa

THE FIFTH Shbeeb Festival for Arts and Culture ended on Sunday in Zerqa. This festival, which lasted a week, had a number of activities. Despite some technical errors in sound, the festival was a great success. Famous singers like Hisham Abaas and Anoshoca from Egypt and Osama Jaboor and Nahawand from Jordan, as well as many others, took part in the festival. Traditional folklore groups from Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan, like Al Nasra and Al Rozaana, contributed to the festival. It was a great week!

Around the world on a bicycle—reviving the Olympic Ideal

By Ghassan Joha
Special to The Star

ANY PROJECT takes planning and inspiration to get off the ground and succeed, but when it comes to traveling around the world on a bicycle you have to be even more of an adventurer to achieve your goal.

Horst Schad is one of those who began touring the world with a mission to promote international understanding and cooperation as we head towards the new millennium. The intrepid German cyclist passed through in Jordan last week on his tour that began in May this year.

Preparations for the "One World 2000" project began in Autumn 1996. Since then, German embassies all over the world and the governments of all of the countries Mr Schad will be traveling through have offered their support and cooperation to make the project possible.

Speaking at a press conference in Amman last Saturday, Mr Schad explained his mission, and stressed that "to draw worldwide attention an exceptional achievement is needed."

On a personal level, he explained that few things could be better than traveling the world "using your own personal strength, and as far as possible, traveling overland."

Mr Schad, a single 34-year-old English teacher, began serious cycling about 11 years ago, touring West Africa and later the Sahara desert. Generally he spends 8-12 hours a day on a bicycle. "I love cycling very much. I find it interesting and the best way of traveling to feel a sense of adventure," he said.

Before setting off on this tour he first had to undergo a thorough health check. When he got the "all clear" from his physician, he then had to get in shape. He followed a strict training schedule of cycling, long distance running and general fitness. In the event of any emergency during the tour, however, a general practitioner will fly out to treat the patient.

The cyclist has also mastered the basic technique of self hypnosis and meditation, to help him withstand the psychological stresses of such a trip. For nearly two years, he has been preparing for the tour by reading extensively. He also has some languages under his belt, speaking fluent English and having a good grasp of French.

The other main aim of the project is to revive the Olympic spirit and the consciousness that all people and nations are a part of the same world. "We want to prove that even today despite all the wars and conflicts, it is still possible to forget borders and literally ride to the other side of the world," Mr Schad stated.

He is always feels enthusiastic and optimistic. Mr Schad also feels lucky when it comes to politics. "I met the Pope during my visit to Italy last May. I felt that my 15-minute meeting with him was very impressive, with very interesting discussion. The Pope was well-informed about the project despite of his illness."

Many German companies have put up funds for the project. Mr Schad reckoned that his average monthly expenses are about DM 7000-8000 (JD 2700-3150).

He told *The Star* that he hopes to find international sponsors for his tour as well as the whole project. TV companies in many countries will present film reports about the "One World 2000" project.

Mr Schad said that his tour of Jordan made him feel at home. "The people here were very friendly—so open and hospitable. They kept asking if I needed any money to continue my trip."

His next stage will be the Arab Peninsula and Iran, central Asia, India and the Himalayas, then South East Asia until he reaches Australia in September 2000. The whole journey covers more than 40,000 kilometers—certainly not for the faint hearted!



A cultural view of the Fuheis Festival

By Ghassan Joha
Special to The Star

THE 9TH Fuheis Festival was officially opened last week by Ayman Samawi, the director of the Festival, who promised visitors that this year's festival has cultural seminars, focusing on various aspects of Arab and national history, as well as a very impressive schedule of musical concerts by singers like George Wassouf and Nawal Al Zoughbi—held at the Main Theatre over a busy nine-day program.

The Festival's activities are all taking place in the downtown area of Fuheis—better known as 'Rouss Al Bayader'—where the visitor can wander from one site. Should this prove a bit tiring for some, you can relax at one of the many coffee shops, smoke narghila, and watch the world go by.

The Forum is the first venue that the festival-goer comes across (lookout for the wooden sign, just past the supermarket on your right), which is hosting the majority of cultural seminars. The Arab City Corner is situated here, with the city of Baghdad being the main attraction this year.

Heading further on, you come across the impressive, stone door at the entrance of Rawaq Al Balqa' (or the Balqa' Gallery), where 51 Iraqi artists and sculptors have displayed their works in the two-room hall. The ancient brick-work designs and the prominent arches of Rawaq Al Balqa' are a delight to see, and the large, cobbled street can easily give you the impression that you are in Jerusalem's Old City. The paintings on display here are both sensual

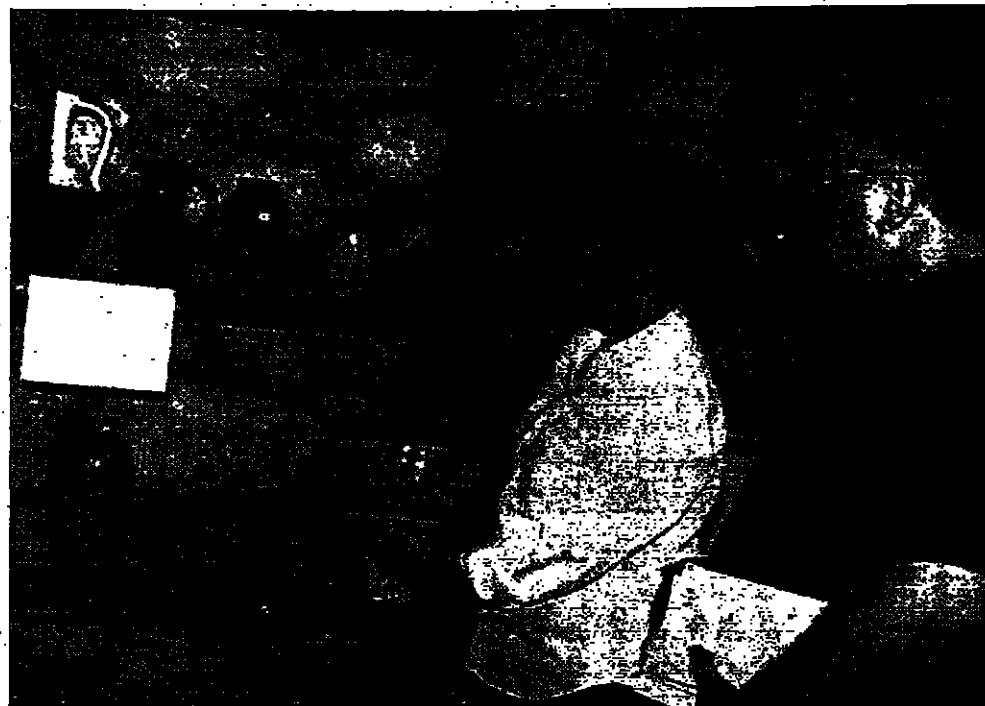


The entrance to the Festival

and original. Walk on, and you come across a small, but impressive book exhibition. There are around 3,000 different titles on display here, covering politics, society, culture and the sciences. The exhibition is sponsored by the Al Gad Publishing House in Amman. "This is the second time we have participated in the festival," Saad Abu-Charbiyah told *The Star*. He added that the festival has a better location this year, and that so far, the number of visitors has exceeded all previous years. He continued, "Our main objective was to let the people see the wide variety of books we have on display, some of which are extremely valuable and cannot be found anywhere else. They are not all for sale either."



George Wassouf in concert



One of the many ceramic exhibitions on display at Fuheis

On turning left or right, you see two rooms filled with antiques and beautiful glass works. These permanently display their goods throughout the year.

Other works, for the duration of the festival only, are housed in the tents and pavilions scattered around the site.

The rope coiled handicrafts are particularly eye-catching, made with such expertise and care.

Next door, you come across glass works, both painting and drawing.

Ataf Saqer, participating in the festival for the first time, along with his friend Mohammed Brahma, told *The Star* that, "glass works in general can take about an hour to make, requiring a lot of talent and attention. Their main workshop is located near Madaba, in an area called 'Harat Jedadina'—(Our Grandparents' Suburb)."

Local entrepreneurs are a common sight at the festival, like Ra'd Bawab, an active young man, who will make up various printed T-shirts on request, or Abdul-Hadi Abu-Diyah, a talented sand bottle maker. Sand painting is more renowned in Petra, but it has now become very popular all over the Kingdom. On the same corner, another man was showing a new art form: one you may not

have seen before—the art of writing your name filled with antiques and beautiful glass works. These permanently display their goods throughout the year. The size of a grain of rice and their bottling it (the bottle is no bigger than your little finger) and making it into a necklace or bracelet of sorts. Some people ask us to write love words in the sand, to write the names of their beloved ones, or to write a novel art work.

From the art on display, the Main Personality Hall this year produced a special exhibition on the life of the late Jordanian Shaker al-Husseini. His political life is depicted in a painting from the 1930s until his death in 1978. He was a prominent activist in national politics and once the mayor of Irbid, an MP, and a member of the senate. He was influential during Jordan's first ever government before World War II under the late Prime Minister Rasheed al-Rikabi.

A few metres away from the Main Personality Hall, you come across a display by the well-known Jordanian caricaturist, Imad Hajaj. His work is on display for the second year running. It was during last year's festival that his caricature, known to us all as 'Abu Mahjoub', came to fame. In this year's festival, Hajaj displayed around 70 pieces of work, covering the whole of the Jordanian social and political spectrum.

If by now you are beginning to experience some "cultural overdose", why not just sit back and enjoy the cool, moist evenings, in one of the many restaurants and open-air cafes that are spread around the exhibition sites and main theatre.

If you haven't made it to the Fuheis Festival yet, you had better hurry, as it ends tomorrow (21 August). ■

Art for art sake

By Lubna Khader
Star Staff Writer

OLD STREETS, ancient buildings, sad faces. These are paintings that reflect tradition, culture, nature and happiness. The circle of human life was present at the exhibition by selected Arab painters at the Orient Gallery in Al Shmesani. Artists from Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq are currently showing their work that has artistic breadth.

The works by Iraq's Saeed Al Kabi, Jordan's Sana' Al Kayali, and Syria's Nazir Abu Afash are particularly striking. Charcoal, water color and oils are used not only for different effect, but to be aesthetically pleasing. What the artists wanted to project is images that are prominent and glaring; ones that want to jump at the onlooker.

The works of Khalid Al Kasab and Ismael Al Shikali, also both from Iraq, highlight a variety of different media to depict the dynamic natural beauty of the country—an extravaganza of palm trees that dramatically symbolizes life in Iraq.

Al Shikali depicts the countryside through the eyes of the rural farmer and his wife in the fields. In this picture, you find the painters concern about nature, and his focus on the relationship between human beings and the earth. Equating man with nature has become a dominant theme in today's world, reflecting the intricate relations between the two.

In another corner, you see the works of



Nazir Abu Afash and Sana' Al Kayali. They let the visitors imagine what they want to express.

Using this approach, Abu Afash mixes sadness with happiness. While Al Kayali has a similar approach,

and portrays a similar theme, there is a distinctive twist to her works. In one of her paintings she depicts a longing for her homeland with the image of an old city lost in blackness. The splashes of black are richly laid to give a dominant effect, indicating how the city is now very much in the hands of the occupiers.

In this respect also, the works of Al Kayali are about awareness, or the lack of it. People need to be more aware of their surroundings, their habitats. It also means that the painter has, in between the colors and the curves, a vivid message, which she wants to bring out in the strongest possible manner.

Over all however, you need to have a keen and discerning eye. In the final analysis, it is up to the onlooker to conjure up a series of images.

The same goes for the art of Yassin Al Mohammadaawi. An Iraqi graduate who has started to paint in 1983. His works represent a distinctive touch. His works concentrate on human beings, their lives and their relations to agriculture and to the modern world.

The relationship between man and nature in paintings has become widespread in recent years. This is the case also in Jordan. Man's destruction of nature through pollution and smog is affecting the whole globe. In this respect, painters worldwide are doing their best to increase awareness, and hopefully, stem the slow destruction of the natural habitat. The exhibit ends 31 August. ■

Hotel Inter Continental Jordan

Inter-Continental Hotels & Resorts offer Six Continents Club members a chance to win a Harley-Davidson.

If you are a member of the Six Continents Club, the world's premier hotel guest recognition programme run by Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts, you can turn your business travel into a smoother ride and find yourself riding away on a Harley-Davidson "Fat Boy."

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So, if you're not a member of the Six Continents Club, join now and not only will you open the doors to a variety of special benefits and privileges at all Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts around the globe, but you could also win yourself a Harley-Davidson "Fat Boy."

For an application form and further details on how the Six Continents Club can make your business travel an easy ride, pick up a copy of the Six Continents booklet at the Six Continents Club desk in any of the participating Inter-Continental Hotels within the Middle East and Africa. ■

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 22-28 August

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Postman Pat (Cartoon)
4:00—Clowning Around
4:30—Neighbours (Drama)
4:30—Second Nature (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prison (Talk Show)
9:10—Sirens (Drama)
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film: The Vanishing Man
12:00—Country Music

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:20—Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Adventures of the Black Stallion
4:00—American Chart Show
5:00—Royal Blood (Doc.)
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
8:00—People Count
8:30—Challenges
9:00—Renegade (Drama)
10:00—News in English
10:30—Dead Man's Walk (Mini Series, Part 1)
12:10—Hist. of Rock & Roll

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Highlander (Cartoon)
3:30—The Gentle from Down Under (Drama)
4:00—Neighbours (Drama)
4:30—Last Frontiers (Doc.)
5:00—French Program



History of Rock & Roll, Sunday at 12:10 pm.

6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
8:00—Perspective
8:30—What's your poison?
9:10—Good Guys, Bad Guys
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Dead Man's Walk (Part 2)
12:10—Hist. of Rock & Roll

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Pink Panther Under (Drama)
4:00—Border Town (Drama)
4:30—Baby It's You (Doc.)
5:00—Shogun Court Series

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Mr. Bogus Show
3:30—Halfway Across The Galaxy & Turn Left
4:00—The Album Show



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): Deep Impact
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Al Za'oon (Arabic)
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Al Za'oon (Arabic)
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Goodwill Hunting
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Al Za'oon (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Deep Impact
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Baby's Day Out

5:00—French Program
6:15—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Buddies (Comedy)
8:00—Envoys Special
8:30—Faces & Places
9:10—Kung-Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Chicago Hope
12:00—Bugs (Drama)

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animated Hero Classics (Cartoon)
3:30—Animal Park (Cartoon)
4:00—L'Ecole Des Fans
4:30—Blue Water Dreaming (Documentary)
5:00—NBA
6:15—Sliders
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters (Com)
8:00—Great Romances of the 20th Century
8:30—Dr Quinn Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film: Zits
12:00—Can't Hurry Love

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin (Cart.)
3:30—The Borrowers
4:00—Film: The Laker Girls
6:15—Les Cles De Fort Boyard (Quiz)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Life on the Digital

Edge

8:30—Understanding Computing
9:10—Babylon 5
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Big Sky (Drama)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

JEUDI
16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'oeuf de Colomb

VENDREDI

18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allô la Terre

SAMEDI

17:00—Fant pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'oeuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI

18:00—Les cœurs brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

17:00—Ushualta
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6
20:00—Envoyé spécial

Programs are subject to change by JTV

FILM



The Shawshank Redemption

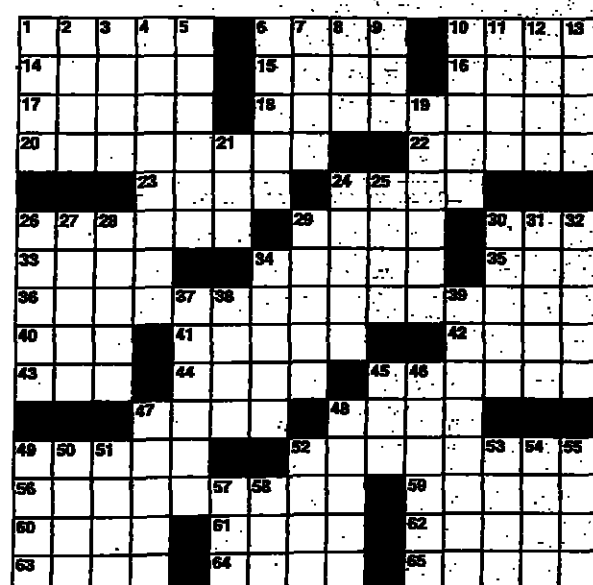
Seeing his beautiful wife in the arms of another man is more than Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) can stand, but what happens next is even more shocking. Andy is convicted of her murder and sent to Shawshank Prison for life. The seasoned convicts there, headed by Red (Morgan Freeman), make bets that he won't last the first night, but Andy is full of surprises! Forming an unlikely friendship with Red, Andy proves his resourcefulness, winning favors from the warden. But as the years go by, Andy and Red never give up the dream of freedom, and together they turn hope and friendship into an uplifting bond no prison can ever take away.



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18:00 — 21:30
On Friday
17:30 — 21:30

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Kind of barage
10 Son of Noah
14 Old Greek city
15 Swiss river
16 In (completing)
17 Apocryphal
18 Excluded
20 Valued
22 Turner
23 Lewis and
24 Gershwin
25 Bullets
26 Lean-to
28 Map
30 Greek letter
33 Orient
34 Lambchop's
35 Lewis
36 Max
37 Tiny part

DOWN
1 Bargain
2 Players for pay
3 "Rhythm"
4 Acquire
5 Say strongly
6 Blaise
7 Subborn
8 Mineral earth
9 Tiny
10 Office
11 Earthenware
12 Small case
13 US female
14 Lucerne
15 Musical drink
16 Springtime
17 Expect
18 Chapin
19 Frame
20 Japanese
21 Poplar
22 Author's
23 Happening
24 Rich cake
25 Heavenly
26 Attempts

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-This Week's-
HOROSCOPES

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Leo. This ought to be fun. Leo's the perfect sign for summer. Leo loves sports, and games and children.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Pay attention to details even if you'd rather be doing something else. A fun relationship could develop.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Looks like you'd rather stay in bed. If you can, definitely do. It's not that you're sick, it's just that you'd like to have some quality time.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Avoid an argument with a friend by doing what he or she wants. The other person is probably right anyway.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll profit through your own sharp wit. Don't think you know it all, however. That would be a big mistake. There's lots more you can learn.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your ruling planet, Mercury, goes retrograde. That'll make it a little more difficult to communicate for a couple of weeks.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Hurry and finish old business so you can start something new. You're very lucky and projects should work out well. That's especially true if it has anything to do with communication, so send that manuscript to the publisher.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Get your team ready for a big project. You're inundated with paperwork. If you stay well-organized and delegate, you can complete it. That's where the team comes in handy.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Watch for an excellent career opportunity. A friend will turn you on to it but you could take action. Teamwork is required to achieve your goals.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Don't start a new project. Although it looks good, there are unrevealed problems. Discuss your project with your mentor.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You and your partner can set up a budget even if you've tried and failed before. Contact with a foreigner brings useful information and could provide the item you're seeking.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). You bring somebody good luck. Give them a shove in the right direction, too.

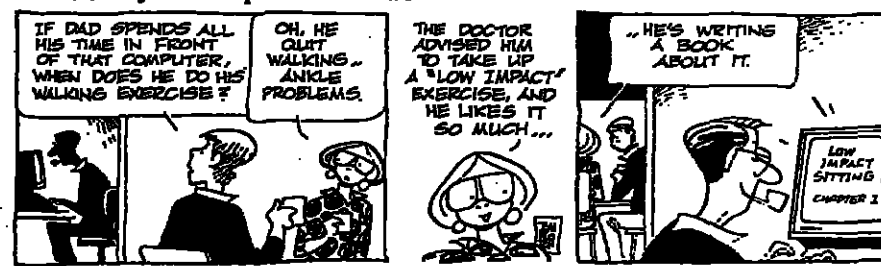
If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You're strong, cheerful and lucky this year. You're also smart. Neighbors and siblings are important in your life this year. They'll teach you what you need to know, if you'll take the time to listen.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SHACO

CANKS

ILDUIQ

GWEEED

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above clues.

Print answer here: _____

Answer: CHAOS SNACK LIQUID WEDGED

Words of Wisdom

You can't fill one hole without digging another.

If you think you know everything, you've got a lot to learn.

Interest may spark the life of a project, but belief will ensure its completion.

The best revenge is to feel contempt for your enemies.

It is easier to ruin with praise than to save with criticism.

In relationships, it's better to think twice before you decide to say nothing.

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Hard Rock night

THE NIGHT of August 20th 1988, will be one to remember. Hard Rock Amman is making the final preparations for their one year anniversary celebration. About 700 people have been invited to celebrate with the Hard Rock Cafe Family this Thursday. The management is promising all attendees, a great night, filled with surprises, and entertainment.

Hard Rock Cafe stands alone on a hill top of Abdoun, featuring the finest food and drink, in a rock'n'roll museum environment.

Additionally, at the start of their second year of operations Firas Khashman (general manager) promises that this year will be filled with live entertainment, on going activities for everyone in the family, and the world renowned quality of Hard Rock Food. If you are of the few who is yet to experience the Hard Rock Cafe, now is the time to go.

Hard Rock Cafe is an international chain of rock'n'roll theme restaurant, with over 90 outlets around the world. Amman, is one of the largest, and most decorated. People from all around the world tour these sights, in the hope of purchasing collector's T-shirts, and other merchandise.

We stick by our motto...love all, serve all, all is one. Come see us to share a one of a kind experience!

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Éclaboussures

Du respect pour nos oreilles

Je ne comprends pas pourquoi les médias nous traitent comme si nous étions des grenouilles incapables de distinguer le chant des oiseaux de celui des cafards. Je ne comprends pas pourquoi, chaque matin, je commence ma journée avec une chanson qui me file des crampes d'estomac, ou l'estomac si l'on considère que la musique est une nourriture du corps et de l'esprit. Et quand celle-ci est gâtée, cela pose des problèmes...

Depuis toujours, la musique est un peu le miroir, le reflet de la situation culturelle et sociale d'une société. D'un pays. Pendant les sixties, les États-Unis ont vécu la défiance Rock and Roll, une musique empreinte de violence, portée aux nues par Elvis Presley et qui emporta tout sur son passage. C'était le temps de la crise avec Cuba puis de la guerre du Vietnam. L'Amérique vivait une période déchaînée.

En Amérique du Sud, le chanteur Victor Gava fut l'un des plus véhéments représentants de la chanson politique. De même, les années 50 et 60 furent les années d'or de la musique arabe. Oum Kalthoum ou Kaoukab al-Shark (la planète de l'Orient), Abdallah, le musicien de toutes les générations, Farid Elatrach ainsi que les frères Rahbani au Liban, autant de noms qui ont marqué cette période faste. Leur réussite est encore aujourd'hui parmi les plus extraordinaires de ce siècle. L'Égypte du président Nasser était alors le pays porteur de cet engouement musical et la nation arabe la plus puissante. La guerre de 1956, la nationalisation du canal de Suez, la construction du haut-barrage d'Assouan et bien sûr l'union avec la Syrie sous la forme d'une République furent autant de coups de force, signes d'une vitalité politique que l'on retrouve dans la musique.

Puis vinrent les années sombres : la guerre de 1967, la mort du Raïs et les accords de Camp David. Beaucoup de citoyens arabes se sont sentis un peu perdus au milieu de tant de bouleversements. La production musicale en pâtit avec une nette baisse qualitative. Désormais des groupes opposés tentent de faire revivre la chanson arabe. Le premier est constitué de chanteurs engagés (deuxième génération égyptienne) qui veulent traiter des problèmes quotidiens des peuples et faire renaître un passé glorieux en le modernisant. Le deuxième groupe est simplement décidé à faire de la chanson un amusement éphémère sans tenir compte de la qualité. Jusqu'à présent, le public a choisi le chemin le plus court en favorisant ces « chanteurs d'amour ». Certes, pour de nombreux jeunes gens en situation politique et économique difficile, cette musique légère leur permet d'oublier un peu leur désespoir et leur inquiétude.

Shadin Suleiman

Le Jourdain
Supplément
du Star
5664153



Abdallah Abu Zema, le défenseur de Weihdat, demande aux supporters d'apprécier avant tout le jeu. Sans haine.

Lens, meilleur public de France

Il existe en France un stade d'un autre temps, très haut, très carré, où le public vient en famille et entonne *La Marseillaise* à la fin de chaque match. Une *Marseillaise* revue et corrigée : « *Allons enfants du RC Lens / Le jour de gloire est arrivé...* ». On connaît la suite. Ici, les refrains des supporters parlent de revanche sur la fatalité. De fierté retrouvée. Et les casques de mineurs font partie de la panoplie des fidèles. C'est donc l'histoire d'une ville où le football n'est pas qu'une simple affaire de ballon, où l'on va au stade comme on allait à la messe, autant par habitude que par croyance. Le stade Félix-Bollaert connaît des records d'affluence : 27.000 spectateurs en moyenne (mieux que Marseille, Lyon ou Bordeaux), pour une ville qui ne compte que 35.000 habitants. Un public fidèle, qui chaque jour de match, se transforme en une belle marée sang et or, les couleurs de l'équipe. Deux couleurs qui en jettent plus que les banals rouge et blanc. Il y a de l'effort, de la souffrance et du courage dans ce sang. Et l'or dit la gloire et l'héroïsme. Dans cette région de France ravagée par le chômage, où les cités minières ont fermé leurs portes les unes après les autres, l'ambiance n'est pas au fatalisme. Au contraire. Les mineurs de fond, les gneules noires, changent de teint avec le RC Lens. Et toute la ville se pare de ces oriflammes et toute la cité crie : « *Fiers d'être Lenois* ». « *Il n'y a que le foot, ici. On n'a pas de théâtre, pas d'événement culturel, rien d'autre pour vibrer. Et si Lens est connu, c'est bien par le foot, uniquement par le foot* », explique une fervente supportrice.

Et puis le RC Lens n'est pas une équipe de seconde zone. La dernière saison a sans doute été la plus belle de son histoire : un premier titre de champion de France et une finale de Coupe perdue contre le PSG.

Mais même quand le club végétait, ils étaient encore plus de 20.000 à se rendre au stade pour chanter et réchauffer le ciel. Ce public-là est formidable et truste chaque année le trophée du meilleur public de France.

Comment en serait-il autrement ? La sportivité chez le supporter lensois semble être une seconde nature. L'anti-hooliganisme est son principe de vie. Chants, maillages de clowns sang et or, casques et lampes de mineurs pour emblèmes : la fête est la première règle. Lorsque les joueurs débouchent sur la pelouse, en lieu et place des acclamations guerrières de ses collègues, à l'équipe adverse et à ses supporters. Ici, on applaudit l'adversaire, on ne l'insulte pas et on ne détruit pas tout si l'on perd.

Avec l'aide des magazines français



Les jeunes supporters du RC Lens.

Culture

Fuheis dans tous ses débats

Le Festival de Fuheis se termine vendredi avec une pièce de théâtre jordanienne. Mais au-delà de ce type de manifestations classiques, la ville propose chaque après-midi des discussions variées, ouvertes à tous.

Sur le parvis de la principale église de la ville, plus de 8000 personnes s'entassent pour écouter George Wassouf, venue interpréter ses dernières chansons. Le Festival de Fuheis est une sorte de mini-Festival de Jérusalem avec ses chanteurs célèbres, sa rue artisanale et ses groupes folkloriques. Il ne manque qu'un ans, cette manifestation, soutenue financièrement par le club culturel municipal, est devenue un rite bien ancré dans la ville chrétienne et le pays. Car davantage que Jérusalem, le Festival de Fuheis favorise l'éclosion de nouveaux talents jordanien. Le directeur, Ayman Samawi, y voit un exemple pour les autres gouvernements du royaume : « C'est le point de rencontre entre des Jordaniens et des arabes venus de toute la région qui veulent réaliser une réforme intellectuelle ».

Séries télé

En effet, Fuheis trouve sa spécificité dans les débats ouverts au public, organisés chaque après-midi du Festival. Ces réunions abordent des thèmes très divers : l'identité culturelle des pays arabes mais aussi des questions politiques ou économiques. Des spécialistes ont ainsi discuté des difficultés du royaume à attirer les investisseurs. « Il faut que le public du festival soit informé sur les problèmes économiques du pays », souligne Mohammad Mamsar, un économiste jordanien, et c'est à nous d'expliquer la nature des défis à venir afin de permettre aux gens de

s'adapter aux situations économiques. Par exemple, la Jordanie et d'autres pays arabes sont en train de privatiser leurs secteurs publics pour surmonter la crise. Par nos débats, nous pouvons apporter des réponses aux questions que se posent les gens ». Lors d'un autre débat, tout aussi savant, l'identité du monde arabe a été abordée. Une identité difficile à trouver, selon un expert syrien, qui pense que « les pays arabes sont en proie à de vagues changements politiques ». Plus insolite, ce débat sur l'avenir des séries télé syriennes ! Ce qu'il y a d'une relation directe entre les manifestations et les débats proposés et les préoccupations quotidiennes des

Youssef Abu Saleh



Les groupes folkloriques font partie des animations habituelles des festivals en Jordanie. Fuheis n'échappe pas à la règle mais garde son originalité avec ses débats.

Le roi donne au prince le pouvoir de changer le gouvernement

● La maladie du roi Hussein, traité aux États-Unis pour un cancer, l'a obligé à déléguer de nouveaux pouvoirs à son frère, le prince héritier Hassan, pour la première fois dans l'histoire du royaume. « La décision du roi ne signifie nullement qu'il va plus mal. Elle vise seulement à donner au régent le pouvoir de changer ou de remanier le gouvernement de M. Abdel Salam Majali qui est la cible de critiques virulentes », a affirmé un haut responsable jordanien s'exprimant sous le couvert de l'anonymat. Dans un décret publié dimanche dernier, le roi Hussein a délégué à son frère cadet (notre photo) le pouvoir de limoger et de nommer le gouvernement.

« L'absence du roi se prolongera encore près de trois mois s'il subit aux États-Unis les quatre cycles de chimiothérapie qu'il lui reste. À son retour en Jordanie, il pourra alors désigner un nouveau Premier ministre et établir le programme d'action du gouvernement », a estimé le haut responsable. Le roi Hussein, 62 ans, hospitalisé depuis le 14 juillet à la clinique Mayo pour un lymphome de type B, déclaré curable, vient d'entamer la deuxième phase de son traitement qui compte six cycles.

Une grogne populaire monte contre le gouvernement de Majali, formé en mars 1997. Le cabinet est accusé de plusieurs maladroites, dont les plus récentes ont été la présentation de chiffres inexacts sur le taux de croissance économique et la mauvaise gestion d'une affaire de pollution d'eau.

Le roi Hussein avait effectivement dénoncé la semaine dernière la mauvaise gestion du pays mettant en cause plusieurs ministres auxquels il avait reproché « négligence et manque de responsabilité ».



Football

Weihdat/Faisali : à quand la trêve ?

Les deux clubs caracolent en tête du championnat, comme d'habitude. Mais à leur rivalité sportive, se superpose une profonde opposition identitaire et chacune de leurs rencontres est ponctuée de multiples violences teintées de hooliganisme. Il est temps que les joueurs et les dirigeants interviennent pour calmer les esprits.

« Ce sont des actes injustifiables qui ne reflètent en aucune façon l'esprit sportif ». Le prince héritier Hassan lui-même est monté au créneau, la semaine dernière, pour dénoncer les violences qui ont suivi le match entre Faisali et Weihdat. Ce n'est pourtant pas la première fois que de tels actes de vandalisme se produisent. Simplement il y a eu peut-être un peu plus de casse que d'habitude.

Weihdat-Faisali. Faisali-Weihdat, la rivalité de ces deux clubs est une vieille tradition de musique qui déraile à presque toutes les rencontres, placées sous un dispositif policier renforcé. Voitures cassées, biens publics dégradés, supporters envoyés à l'hôpital sont les incidents habituels d'après-match.

La semaine passée, les deux équipes se sont rencontrées deux fois de suite à quelques jours d'intervalle. La première confrontation, en finale de la coupe de Jordanie, fut remportée par Faisali sur le score de 2 à 1. Trois jours après, Weihdat a pris sa revanche en championnat en écrasant son rival 3 à 0. Mais, pour les esprits échauffés des supporters, ce dernier match fut le match de trop, celui des débordements inévitables.

La compétition acharnée entre ces deux clubs de seconde valeur pourrait se résumer à une simple opposition sportive et à une comptabilité des trophées. Ces dernières années, en effet, ils ont pratiquement tout raté : coupes de Jordanie, coupes des vainqueurs de



Entre les supporters des deux équipes, les insultes fusent. Ici, le « kop » de Faisali.

coupes et bien sûr, le championnat de l'élite. Depuis quatre ans, Weihdat est un champion de Jordanie indéfectible. Une suprématie verte qui a succédé à une autre... celle, bleu ciel, de Faisali. Mais cette rivalité ne se réduit malheureusement pas à une simple comparaison des palmarès. Elle trouve en réalité ses racines dans une opposition inavouable entre Jordaniens de souche et Jordaniens d'origine palestinienne. Car évidemment le club de Weihdat ne peut être neutre et s'associe inévitablement au camp de réfugiés palestiniens du même nom. D'ailleurs, ses locaux que les dirigeants menaçaient de fermer à la suite des échauffourées pour exprimer leur mécontentement, se situent au cœur de la vie du camp, dans la rue principale.

Et puis le club a été créé au milieu des années 70, années noires pour les relations entre le royaume et les Palestiniens. « Je crois qu'au début de son existence, Weihdat avait des joueurs qui alimentaient la

rivalité politique dans le public et Faisali, de son côté, faisait la même chose », essaye d'expliquer Abdallah Abu Zema, jeune défenseur de Weihdat. Depuis qu'il est arrivé dans ce club, il y a huit ans, il a toujours connu cette ambiance malsaine des tribunes et a appris à vivre avec. « Nous, on joue au football sans s'occuper de politique », assure-t-il.

Malgré ses origines palestiniennes, Abdallah ne veut pas se poser plus de questions. Sélectionné dans l'équipe nationale, c'est lui qui brandissait le drapeau jordanien après la qualification pour la phase finale de la Coupe arabe, obtenue au détriment justement de la Palestine. Pas d'états d'âme, sauf peut-être quand la pression du public est trop forte : « Il m'arrive alors de me sentir palestinien quand je joue contre Faisali », avoue le jeune défenseur de 22 ans, mais je garde mes sentiments pour moi ».

Jeris Tadros, le célèbre attaquant de Faisali, est d'accord également pour dépasser le cliv-

age Faisali-Jordaniens/Weihdat-Palestiniens, qui, selon lui, n'a pas lieu d'être. « Dans les deux équipes, il y a des joueurs d'origine palestinienne », insiste-t-il. Les violences d'après-match, qu'il apparente à du hooliganisme, sont le fait d'une minorité « manipulée par des partis politiques, qui veulent faire échouer le football jordanien ». L'unité nationale serait donc mise en danger par une poignée d'irresponsables. Le discours est trop bien calqué sur la rengaine officielle pour tomber juste. Entre Jordaniens et Palestiniens, on est tout de même loin de l'entente cordiale. Cependant, ce conflit identitaire n'a rien à faire dans l'enceinte d'un stade.

Il reste aux dirigeants et aux joueurs qui ont depuis longtemps, entre la hache de guerre et le tonnerre de leurs joies, des réunions ont récemment été mises en place avec la participation des deux associations de supporters. Mais il faudra, sans doute du temps avant d'obtenir un résultat tangible. On n'efface pas d'un coup une rivalité qui s'enracine jusque dans le quotidien. Quant aux joueurs, ils doivent montrer l'exemple et surtout éviter, sur le terrain comme en dehors, tout geste qui pourrait encourager le comportement belliqueux de leurs fans. « Avec les autres joueurs de l'équipe nationale, raconte ainsi Abdallah Abu Zema, nous sommes souvent ensemble. Et je ne refuse jamais, même si l'invitation vient d'un joueur de Faisali. Parole d'un sage du football. »

Le Jourdain

Santé

Chéri, je me suis refait une beauté

La chirurgie esthétique attire de plus en plus de monde. La Jordanie s'en est fait une spécialité à des prix plus abordables qu'ailleurs.

« Non, ce n'est pas une mode ! ». Farid Yaghnam, l'un des pionniers de cette spécialité en Jordanie, refuse cette idée : « La chirurgie esthétique est utilisée comme une nécessité, pas comme un goût du jour. La plupart des patients qui se décident à pratiquer une opération de chirurgie esthétique, c'est parce qu'ils en ont vraiment besoin ». Une Palestinienne raconte ainsi qu'avant de pratiquer la chirurgie esthétique, elle devait se raser tous les jours en raison d'un dérangement hormonal. « Le traitement que je suis actuellement est très bon mais je vais en finir avec mon problème », espère-t-elle.

1500 à 2000 JD

Le docteur Gaith Shubeilat nuance un peu le point de vue de son confrère mais les deux médecins sont d'accord pour constater que la publicité a joué un rôle important dans le développement de leur discipline dans le royaume hachémite. Les médias débordent d'images glorieuses de corps parfaits et de silhouettes graciles. Du coup, les gens accordent beaucoup d'importance à leur apparence physique. Cela est vrai en Occident, cela l'est de plus en plus aussi en Jordanie, où la toute première opération de chirurgie esthétique a eu lieu en 1963 : « Au début ce n'était pas facile. Les gens n'avaient aucune idée de la



chirurgie esthétique. Ils pensaient que c'était comme une sorte de maquillage », se souvient le docteur Farid Yaghnam. Depuis les choses ont changé et aujourd'hui le royaume est considéré comme le pays qui possède les meilleurs spécialistes de la discipline, ce qui explique que des gens des pays du Golfe et de l'Europe viennent spécialement passer quelques temps en terre hachémite. Les prix moins élevés qu'ailleurs sont l'autre argument de vente de la chirurgie esthétique jordanienne. Une opération du nez coûte ici entre 1500 et 2000 dinars, contre plus de 10.000 ailleurs souvent à l'étranger. Un luxe que tous ne peuvent

se permettre. Les classes les plus modestes ne choisissent la chirurgie esthétique qu'en dernier recours, afin de gommer une déformation de la jambe ou du visage à la suite d'un accident ou de graves brûlures. La chirurgie esthétique à proprement parler est réservée à l'élite. Beaucoup de jeunes filles de bonne famille viennent ainsi voir le docteur Yaghnam pour corriger quelque chose qu'elles n'aiment pas dans leur corps. Avec l'accord de leurs parents et généralement bien informés sur le sujet, elles font modifier à leur goût leurs seins, leurs paupières ou leur abdomen. Certaines viennent même avec la photo de telle ou telle

actrice en espérant bientôt lui ressembler. Mais les médecins refusent d'encourager ce genre de comportement en essayant d'expliquer que les résultats obtenus ne seraient être toujours à la hauteur des espoirs formulés. Une opération de chirurgie esthétique n'est pas banale et demande à être bien réfléchie. Il devra suivre un traitement strict : du sport, une alimentation équilibrée, pas trop de soleil et surtout pas de tabac. La beauté exige toujours quelques sacrifices.

Amneh Ishtay

Le mot de la semaine

«BARBARE»

Barbare vient du grec barbaros qui désigne celui qui ne parle pas grec. L'étranger, il s'agit d'une onomatopée, c'est-à-dire d'une imitation phonétique représentant la confusion d'un langage que le Grec ne comprenait pas. En français, un adjectif s'est formé sur ce mot. Barbare est d'ailleurs apparu au latin. Les Grecs, qui s'appelaient eux-mêmes hēllēnēz, ont appelé les autres peuples barbares. L'origine, barbare n'est pas péjorative. Le sens de non-civilisé est venu se greffer sur la notion d'étranger en un second temps, lorsque les Grecs ont placé une réflexion sur leur propre société. Dès ce moment, l'étranger s'est perçu de la supériorité de sa civilisation vis-à-vis d'autres cultures qui pouvaient le dépasser. En français, bar-

bare a toujours été péjoratif, antonyme de civilisé, poli, éduqué, correct et même de chrétien. En effet, au Moyen-Âge, il désigne l'ennemi et plus particulièrement le musulman. L'Afrique du Nord était appelée la Barbarie ou les États barbaresques. Barbare est peut-être à l'origine de barbare, nom donné aux populations indigènes du nord de l'Afrique. En français actuel, il a produit un dérivé qui remplace la racine dans son champ d'origine, c'est-à-dire le langage : un barbarisme est une erreur qui consiste à mal employer un mot ou à le déformer. Par exemple solutionner au lieu de résoudre.

Véronique Abu-Nijmeh

Les Perses, dont nous avons ci-contre un beau spécimen, étaient l'un des peuples qualifiés de «barbares» par les Grecs.



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Démographie

La contraception pour des familles plus heureuses

La Jordanie ne dispose pas de richesses suffisantes par rapport à une population en constante augmentation. Depuis un an, un programme de planning familial à l'échelle nationale a été mis en place. Des centres accueillent les femmes et leur conseillent différents moyens pour mieux appréhender leur vie de famille.

Une dizaine de femmes sont assises dans une salle d'attente. Elles sont venues dans ce centre spécialisé dans le planning familial d'Irbid pour y recevoir des conseils de la part d'une assistante sociale ou passer un examen médical. Les

murs sont tapissés d'affiches et de brochures sur les moyens modernes de contraception, leur mode d'emploi, ainsi que leurs avantages et leurs inconvénients. «Auparavant, le planning familial n'était pas une nécessité», explique Ariga Kaname,

l'assistante sociale, mais la population jordanienne a beaucoup augmenté ces dernières années, surtout après la Guerre du Golfe. De 586.000 habitants en 1952, on est passé à 4,6 millions en 1996. Le taux de mortalité a beaucoup baissé aussi.

C'est pourquoi la Jordanie est aujourd'hui en sixième position parmi les pays qui souffrent le plus du poids de leur population par rapport aux richesses disponibles. Le centre où travaille Ariga reçoit chaque jour plus de vingt femmes qui, outre une information complète sur les différents moyens de contraception, peuvent également suivre des cours sur les maladies féminines (cancer du sein ou de l'utérus) ou sur le suivi d'une grossesse.

Ghada Al-Bakar est aussi assistante sociale dans un autre centre d'Irbid. Selon elle, l'idée du planning familial n'est pas nouvelle : «Notre association s'est installée à Irbid dès 1971». Mais un véritable programme à l'échelle nationale n'a été mis en place que l'an dernier. Ce programme intitulé «Le comité national de la population» rassemble plusieurs partenaires : les ministères de la Santé, du Développement et des Affaires religieuses et l'association de Ghada, la Communauté jordanienne pour organiser la famille (placée sous la férule de l'Union internationale pour le planning familial à Londres), qui regroupe une vingtaine de centres sur tout le territoire et deux centres mobiles qui se déplacent dans les villages, les écoles etc. «Notre but

est d'informer les femmes qui sont sur le point de se marier afin de leur enseigner les moyens d'avoir une bonne structure familiale», précise encore Ghada. Le programme est surtout censé toucher les jeunes générations et amorcer le changement afin d'abaisser le taux de croissance de la population, trop élevé à présent (3,4%). Le docteur Mouna Gzawi estime tout de même qu'aujourd'hui, «les gens sont plus conscients de l'importance d'un planning familial. Et les moyens de contraception sont plus abordables qu'avant. Il y a vingt ans, un stérilet coûtait 30 dinars, contre 3 dinars de nos jours».

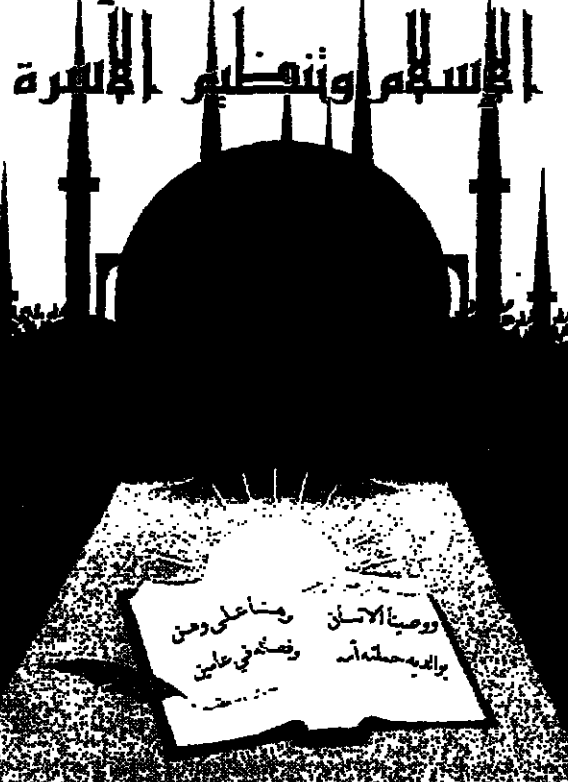
Moins coopératifs

Le médecin, une fois l'examen médical achevé, dispense ses conseils sur la meilleure contraception à adopter selon l'état physique et psychologique de la patiente et en accord avec celle-ci. Yusra, 25 ans, a choisi la pilule. Elle a un an et demi d'écart entre eux. J'ai commencé la pilule il y a un an malgré les protestations de mon mari. J'étais devenue trop fatiguée. Je crois que j'ai commis deux fautes : la première de m'être mariée à 16 ans alors que j'étais encore in-

consciente de toutes ces questions et la deuxième, de ne pas avoir pris assez de temps entre ma première et ma deuxième grossesse.

Mais désormais les jeunes femmes hésitent moins à prendre conseil auprès d'un médecin. C'est le cas de Nadia, qui s'est rendue dans un des centres d'Irbid pour la première fois : «Je suis venue pour un examen de grossesse. Si je ne suis pas enceinte, je prendrai une contraception car nous traversons une période difficile. Notre situation économique ne nous permet pas d'avoir un troisième enfant». Cette démarche responsable est surtout le fait des femmes. Les maris restent encore en retrait. Selon Ghada, l'assistante sociale, les hommes acceptent volontiers d'adopter le préservatif par exemple. Le docteur Gzawi est plus sceptique et trouve les hommes beaucoup moins coopératifs que leurs compagnes : «Beaucoup pensent que ce problème est de la responsabilité de la femme et ils refusent de prendre eux-mêmes un moyen de contraception dans le cas où leur épouse ne peut en adopter un, en raison de son état de santé». Une femme se souvient ainsi avec amertume que son mari a cessé d'utiliser des préservatifs sans

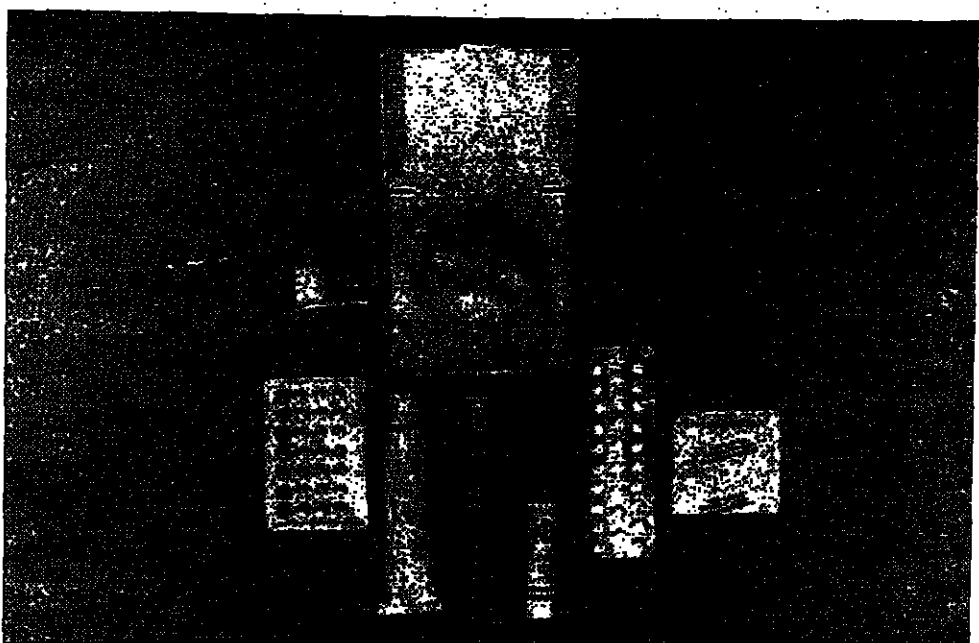
الجمعية الأردنية لتنظيم وحماية الأسرة



Cette brochure sur le planning familial selon l'islam est l'une de celles que peuvent consulter les visiteurs des centres spécialisés.

la prévenir : «Je suis tombée enceinte et j'ai beaucoup pleuré car je n'étais pas prête pour un deuxième enfant. Quelques années plus tard, en revanche, j'ai vraiment décidé d'avoir mon troisième». Forte de son expérience, la femme poursuit son témoignage en conseillant au jeunes filles «de ne pas se marier avant 24 ans, de mén-

Shadin Suleiman



Stérilet, pilule, préservatif... les moyens de contraception proposés sont nombreux. Sur les conseils d'un médecin, les femmes choisissent celui qui leur correspond le mieux.

Raining stones : sale temps pour l'Angleterre

Raining Stones, une comédie dramatique anglaise réalisée par Ken Loach (1993), en version française. Prix du Jury au Festival de Cannes 93. En prêt au Centre culturel français.



Bob et sa femme Anne habitent Manchester, une des principales villes d'Angleterre sinistrées par le chômage. Bob est lui aussi une victime de ce fléau. Depuis des mois, il cherche en vain un travail stable. Alors pour s'en sortir, il multiplie les petits boulots sans lendemain, les combines et les larcins comme voler un mouton ou le gazon de la permanence des conservateurs. Car il faut beaucoup d'argent pour offrir à sa fille Coline, une belle robe blanche pour sa première communion. Bob ne veut pas qu'elle ait l'air d'une pauvre en entrant dans l'église, à côté des autres enfants. Il a sa fierté et refuse même l'aide du curé catholique. Ken Loach nous livre ainsi la crise économique, sans voyeurisme ni mélodrame. Le film évite une mise en scène de la pauvreté et, au contraire, ne manque pas d'humour (la blague du miraculé de Lourdes est excellente), malgré toutes les mille auxquelles doit faire face le héros.

Le réalisateur, en effet, ne nous épargne rien : drogue, violence, vol. Les personnages évoluent dans un monde sans issue et se battent contre des moutons à vent, tout en gardant la foi. «Pour l'ouvrier, il pleut des pierres sept jours sur sept», se permet-avec poésie Jimmy, le beau-père de Bob. Le parti conservateur est au pouvoir depuis plus de dix ans et les travaillistes semblent incapables de proposer une autre politique. Ce sont les années d'avant Tony Blair et l'Angleterre y est particulièrement marquée. Dans ce décor de briques et de grisaille, les acteurs ne cherchent pas l'esbroufe. Très sobres, ils n'ont rien d'un Leonardo Di Caprio ou d'un Brad Pitt. Ils jouent des vies banales, terriblement humaines et rendent leur tristesse, leur misère, leur douleur, leur joie aussi, terriblement proches de nous coups et tous les autres nous apparaissent attachants. Malgré les épreuves, ils ont su garder une certaine solidarité entre eux. Bref, Bob, Tommy, son camarade des 400 coups et tous les autres nous apparaissent attachants. Malgré les épreuves, ils ont su garder une certaine solidarité entre eux. Bref, Bob, Tommy, son camarade des 400 coups et tous les autres nous apparaissent attachants. Malgré les épreuves, ils ont su garder une certaine solidarité entre eux. Bref, Bob, Tommy, son camarade des 400 coups et tous les autres nous apparaissent attachants.

Amineh Ishtay



Pour acheter la robe blanche de communion de sa fille, Bob est prêt à tout, même à voler de la pelouse à la permanence des conservateurs.

Loisirs
Un cinéma pieds et poings liés

Après la déferlante Titanic, difficile d'échapper au raz-de-marée Adel Imam et son Al-Zaïm diffusé dans quatre salles de cinéma en même temps. L'offre proposée ne favorise guère la diversité, ni la qualité. Les gérants de cinémas s'expliquent.

Malgré l'ouverture de nouvelles salles à Abdoon destinées à l'élite, le cinéma semble toujours avoir des difficultés à émerger. Les Jordaniens préfèrent souvent organiser un pique-nique, regarder la télévision ou s'offrir un bon restaurant. Selon les directeurs du Galleria et du Philadelphia, gérants des salles obscures n'est pas une affaire facilement rentable. Bien qu'ils aient refusé de nous communiquer des chiffres, ils affirment aussi que les recettes générées sont loin d'être satisfaisantes. Pourtant attirer le public n'est pas le principal de leurs soucis. Dans les coulisses de l'industrie cinématographique, ils sont confrontés à d'autres difficultés qui ne leur permettent pas, disent-ils, d'assurer une programmation qui satisfasse tout le monde. Il est vrai que le spectateur a de quoi se montrer perplexe devant certains choix de diffusion qui paraissent incohérents. C'est *Titanic* ou *Al-Zaïm* (qui soit dit en passant n'est pas du cinéma mais du théâtre filmé) omniprésents, c'est un film d'action sans intérêt *Jurassic Park II* pour ne pas le citer, distribué à l'autourne et de nouveau à l'affiche à la fin du printemps, ce sont des productions américaines souvent très médiocres que l'on repasse jusqu'à l'épuisement. Bref, le cinéophile n'a pas grand chose à se mettre devant les yeux.

En outre, il semble que les gérants de salles prennent un malin plaisir à nourrir la frustration, en suivant la règle suivante : «Plus le film est bon, moins de temps il reste à l'affiche». Cela a été le cas notamment de *She's so lovely* ou encore de *Copland*, expédié en une semaine. Si le film ne trouve pas très vite son public, on ne lui laisse pas de seconde chance. En fait, comme dans d'autres secteurs, l'argent est ici le critère déterminant. «Nous devons faire des profits pour survivre», admet Saad Mousasher, le propriétaire du Galleria, avant de préciser : «Mais bien sûr nous devons aussi remplir une mission de qualité auprès de notre public». Satisfaire un public exigeant tout en assurant des entrées d'argent confortables, le

pari semble impossible.

Surtout que, selon les gérants de salles, les distributeurs de films ne facilitent pas leur tâche. «Les spectateurs pensent que c'est un processus simple, mais en réalité l'occupation de cinéma à Amman, c'est un numéro d'acrobatie», insiste Saad. Un numéro qui n'intéresse pas vraiment les grandes compagnies américaines dominantes de l'industrie du cinéma dans le monde et pour qui le marché du Proche-Orient représente peu de choses. Ce marché est d'ailleurs part biaisé dans la mesure où les droits d'auteur n'y sont pas toujours bien respectés. C'est le cas de la Jordanie où le film arrive dans les bacs des vidéothèques avant d'entrer dans les salles obscures.

Bref, les gérants de cinémas ne sont pas dans une position avantageuse pour négocier l'achat des super-productions.

«Nous achetons un ensemble de

films proposés par les distributeurs, explique Saad Mousasher et nous en payons certains que nous ne diffuserons pas si nous n'avons le choix». Les productions sont vendues en lot avec à l'intérieur des choses plus ou moins bonnes. A Amman, le gérant-propriétaire de cinémas détermine ses choix en fonction des meilleurs films du lot mais de toute façon, il doit tout prendre. Par ailleurs, selon Samih Sekali, le directeur du Philadelphia, les conditions d'achat sont très sévères : «Nous disposons d'un agent américain qui achète les films aux grandes maisons de production. Nous devons lui payer une garantie de 5000 à 30.000 dinars et notre agent reçoit ensuite 65 à 70% de nos recettes (entrées moins les dépenses diverses en marketing notamment...)». Autant dire que, malgré une marge de manœuvre réduite, les gérants de salles y réfléchissent à

deux fois avant de choisir tel ou tel long métrage. Car les mauvaises surprises ne sont pas rares : un film qui a fait un tabac ailleurs ne va pas forcément plaire en Jordanie. Samih se souvient avoir été déçu par les résultats du dernier James Bond ou encore du Cinquième élément : «Pour ce dernier, on n'est même pas rentrés dans nos frais». Avec *Al-Zaïm*, en revanche, les gérants étaient sûrs de leur coup. «*Adel Imam* est une star et sa pièce de théâtre ne sortira pas en vidéo dans un futur proche», justifie Samih Sekali pour expliquer la programmation du film dans plusieurs salles en même temps. Le Philadelphia et le Galleria se sont ainsi associés pour répondre à la forte demande de leur clientèle respective et profiter ensemble des marnes d'un pitre égyptien. ■

Arine Mango



L'acteur égyptien Adel Imam est partout. Dans *Al-Zaïm* au Philadelphia et au Galleria et dans *La lettre au gouverneur*, au Concorde. Les cinémas d'Amman misent sur son immense popularité.

STAR ONLINE

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Addasi

The 5th Arab Junior Swimming Championship

Hana Majaj has a golden future

By Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to the Star

THE JORDANIAN swimmer Hana Majaj clinched three gold medals, helping Jordan to reach third position on the general classifying scoreboard (sixth position on the medals scoreboard), during the 5th Arab Junior Swimming Championships held in Amman, under the patronage of HRH Princess Rania Al Abdallah.

Majaj won Jordan's first medal in the 200m butterfly (under 16), setting a new arab junior record (and the second best all-time arab women's record) in a time of 2:26.99 minutes.

She continued her success with a second gold medal in the 100m butterfly, clocking 1:01.71 minutes. Her last gold medal was in the 50m butterfly, in a time of 31.05 seconds. In each race, Majaj faced tough competition from Egyptian and Algerian swimmers.

Jordan also won two silver medals. The relay team (Farah Younes, Dima Ghneem, Sandi Zreiq and Rasha Ghosheh) came runners up in the 4x100m free style (under 13) clocking 5:01.40 minutes, and by the same team (with

Greeses Kichek replacing Rana Ghosheh) in 4x50m medley, in a time of 2:29.66 minutes.

In addition, Jordan won eight bronze medals by the relay team (Tala Khouri, Bseet Zaitoon, Hana Majaj and Rania Ghosheh) in the 4x100m freestyle, Farah Younes in 50m backstroke (under 13), Sadeq Damra in 100m backstroke (under 15), the relay team (George Khouri, Nader Ghaidah, Sahir Rabadi and Bilal Abo Ragheb) in 4x50m medley (under 13), the relay team (Raed Nawras, Sadeq Hamsah, Saied Al Naser and Omar Abo Faris) in 4x100m freestyle (under 15). The last bronze medal was gained on the closing day, by the Kingdom's under 16 girls team in the 4x200m freestyle relay.

Egypt dominated the majority of the races, forcing all the other nations to compete harder. Egypt also won the water polo competition, beating Saudi Arabia and Iraq on the way.

Eleven Arab countries participated in the championship, the first of many in preparation for the forthcoming Pan Arab Games, in Amman next year.



Nour El Dein, President of Jordan's Swimming Federation, hands the Egyptian team the cup for first place

Medals Scoreboard and standing

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Egypt	20	51	11	82
Algeria	14	12	2	28
Jordan	3	2	8	13
Syria	1	1	1	3
Tunisia	1	1	1	3
Morocco	1	1	1	3
Lebanon	1	1	1	3
Oman	1	1	1	3
Saudi Arabia	1	1	1	3
Iraq	1	1	1	3
Palestine	1	1	1	3



Her Royal Highness Princess Rania Al Abdallah patronized the championship

Arab Cup Final Draw Jordan face Qatar and Libya in Group A

DOHA (Star)—The draw for the Arab Cup Final was made in Doha last week, in the presence of Mr Othman Al Saad, General Secretary of the Arab Football Federation, and representatives of the twelve countries participating in the competition—due to be held in Doha between the 22nd September and 1st October.

The qualifying teams were placed in four groups: Jordan was placed in Group A with Libya and Qatar, the host country. The three teams will compete for a place in the semi-finals.

Group B includes Egypt—the title holders—Syria and Kuwait. Group C includes Morocco, UAE and Sudan. Group D includes Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Lebanon.

Jordan's national team is the only team to qualify for every competition, and Jordan hopes to better their semi final place in the fifth championship held in Amman in 1988.

Jordan won the Pan Arab Games competition held in Lebanon last year, which should give them the confidence to aspire to great things in Doha. ■



Evander Holyfield The Boxer's champion

THE FOLLOWING is a year by year account of Evander Holyfield's rise to boxing fame.

October 19, 1962
Evander Holyfield is born in Atmore, Ala., the youngest of eight children. Holyfield's family moved to Atlanta when he was three.

1970
Eight-year-old Evander starts his boxing career at the Warren Memorial Boys Club in Atlanta under the tutelage of coach Morgan Carter, who predicts the scrawny, 65-pound Holyfield will one day be a champion.

August 9, 1984
Holyfield, the favorite to win gold in the light heavyweight division at the Los Angeles Olympics, knocks out New Zealand's Kevin

Barry in the semifinals as referee Glorig Novicic is calling for a break. Holyfield is disqualified, and under amateur rules Barry cannot fight for 28 days because he was stopped by a head blow. Novicic's Yugoslav countryman Anton Jospovic wins the gold in a walkover and Holyfield is forced to settle for bronze.

November 15, 1984
Widely recognized after his Olympic-sized controversy, Holyfield makes his pro debut at New York's venerable Madison Square Garden, in a nationally televised, prime-time bout. He scores a unanimous six-round decision over Lionel Byarm.

May 17, 1985
Holyfield marries Paulette Bowen, who is five months pregnant with their second child.

July 12, 1986
Holyfield becomes the first '84 Olympian to win a world title, taking the WBA cruiserweight crown with a grueling 15-round split decision over Dwight Muhammad Qawi. In his 11 previous pro bouts (all victories), Holyfield had never gone longer than eight rounds.

April 9, 1988
Holyfield becomes the first undefeated, undisputed cruiserweight champion with an eighth-round TKO of WBC champ Carlos DelLeon.

October 25, 1990
Eight months after James "Buster" Douglas shocked the world with his upset of "Iron" Mike Tyson, Holyfield flattens a flabby, 246-pound Douglas in three rounds to win the undisputed world heavyweight title. Wife Paulette had filed for divorce the week before, but "Real Deal" was able to stay focused.

October 18, 1991
Holyfield's scheduled November 8 bout with Mike Tyson is postponed after Tyson tears cartilage in his ribs. With Tyson's subsequent conviction for rape, the fight would not take place until 1996.

October 13, 1992
Holyfield loses his first pro fight—and the heavyweight title—to Riddick Bowe in a 12-round unanimous decision before a crowd of 18,500 in Las Vegas.

November 6, 1993
Holyfield exacts revenge on Bowe, earning a majority decision, \$11 million and the WBA and IBF heavyweight titles. The most memorable moment of the Caesars Palace bout occurred when James "Fan Man" Miller swooped into the ring via motorized paraglider during the seventh round.

April 26, 1994
Four days after losing his heavyweight titles in a 12-round majority decision to Michael Moorer, Holyfield's personal physician, Dr. Ronald Stephens, announces that Holyfield has been diagnosed with a hole in his heart and recommends retirement.

Stephens said Holyfield fought Moorer in a state of "heart failure" and that it was "an absolute miracle" that he made it through.

June 10, 1994
At a Christian revival meeting in Philadelphia, Florida evangelist Benny Hinn lays his hands on Holyfield, offers a healing, prayer, and announces that Holyfield's future wife is in the audience. Afterward Holyfield says that his heart condition is gone. Four days later additional tests done at Emory University's Crawford Long Hospital show improvement, and doctors at the Mayo Clinic subsequently find that the defect never existed. Holyfield insists the ordeal was a test from God.

May 20, 1995
Holyfield makes a triumphant return to the ring, winning a unanimous 10-round decision over Ray Mercer.

October 3, 1996
Holyfield marries Dr. Janice Iton—a 31-year-old internist who happened to have attended Hinn's Philadelphia meeting—in a private ceremony in Atlanta. His son, Evander Jr., serves as best man. (Holyfield has four other children: Ashley, Ebony, Ewene and Emony.) Iton joins Holyfield in his \$15 million, 54,000-square foot house in Atlanta.

November 9, 1996
In one of the most anticipated bouts in boxing history, Holyfield defeats Tyson by TKO in the 11th round to win the WBA title and join Muhammad Ali as the only three-time heavyweight champion.

June 28, 1997
With 33 seconds to go in the second round of Holyfield-Tyson II, a desperate Tyson bites Holyfield on the left ear. As Round 3 is about to end Tyson makes another lunge, this time chomping a piece of Holyfield's right ear and spitting it onto the mat. Referee Mills Lane disqualifies Tyson. Holyfield retains the title and takes home \$35 million for his trouble.

November 8, 1997
Avengeing his 1994 loss, a 35-year-old Holyfield buries Moorer with a TKO in the eighth round to capture the IBF title.

December 24, 1997
Contract talks break down among Holyfield, WBC champion Lennox Lewis and promoter Don King, thwarting hopes for a title-unification bout. Holyfield was unhappy with the financial guarantees promised by King.

June 5, 1998
The day before Holyfield is scheduled to meet Henry Akinwande at Madison Square Garden, the bout is called off because the challenger failed his physical, testing positive for hepatitis B. ■

Sports Illustrated

Football Roundup Ilber gives Bundesliga favourites Bayern winning start and Kamona proved his quality

The Star, and associated agencies—LIFE RETURNED to the majority of Europe's football stadiums this week, when the new seasons started in England and Germany (the French league commenced last week).

Highlights on the 1st week of the German League (Bundesliga)

A SECOND-HALF goal by Giovane Elber gave German first division title favourites Bayern Munich a 1-0 win at VfL Wolfsburg in their opening match of the new season on Saturday.

Brazilian striker Elber squeezed past Wolfsburg's Croatian defender Marijan Kovacevic to score the only goal of an otherwise uneventful match, with a shot from inside the penalty area in the 65th minute. Bayern, eager to recapture the title they lost to unfancied Kaiserslautern last May, needed time to settle and suffered from the absence in midfield of Mehmet Scholl and Mario Basler, both injured.

Helped by the organising skills of playmaker Stefan Effenberg, who has re-joined Bayern from Borussia Moenchengladbach, the ambitious Munich side were clearly the better team in the second half. "Wolfsburg played well and we were too slow in the first half," said Bayern's new coach Ottmar Hitzfeld. "In the second half, we played much better and deserved our victory." The in-form Elber has now scored five goals in three matches after a hat-trick in a 4-0 demolition of VfB Stuttgart in the League Cup final last Saturday and one goal in another 4-0 win over Obolitz Belgrade in an European Cup qualifying tie on Wednesday.

Champions Kaiserslautern also started their Bundesliga campaign with an away win, beating TSV 1860 Munich 2-1 with Egyptian newcomer Samir Ibrahim scoring the winner in the 62nd minute. Striker Bernhard Winkler put the home side in front from the penalty spot in the 12th minute after being brought down by Kaiserslautern's goalkeeper Andreas Reineke.

The visitors levelled through danger man Olaf Marschall, who headed home from a cross by Brazilian midfielder Ratinho three minutes before the break. Defender Ibrahim, who joined from Cairo club Al Ahly, looked clumsy at times but gave Kaiserslautern the



Action from the game between Manchester United and Leicester City

points with his long-range effort.

Bayer Leverkusen, who spent 12 millions marks (\$6.68 million) on Flamengo's Brazilian international midfielder Ze Roberto in the most expensive German transfer this summer, needed a double from defender Stefan Beinlich to tame Hansa Rostock 3-1.

Watched by Germany coach Bert Vogts, Beinlich struck in the 23rd and 46th minutes. Midfielder Joerg Reeb, a signing from Arminia Bielefeld, added a third in the 73rd minute. Croatian striker Igor Pamic scored for Rostock with a header in the 42nd minute.

Schalke 04 were crushed 3-0 at Borussia Moenchengladbach, who flared with relegation last season. Moenchengladbach made a dream start with veteran Austrian striker Toni Polster opening the scoring after just two minutes. Sweden Jorgen Pettersson made it 2-0 eight minutes later and midfielder Mathias Hagner put the issue beyond

doubt in the 80th minute. In the last game of the week, Hertha Berlin beat Werder Bremen 1-0.

France: 1st Division results (second week)

Le Havre (2) vs Girondins Bordeaux (3)
Monaco (4) vs Sochaux (1)
Paris St. Germain (2) vs Bastia (0)
Nantes (1) vs Strasbourg (0)
AJ Auxerre (3) vs Nancy (2)
Montpellier (3) vs Rennes (1)
Metz (0) vs Olympiques Marseille (1)

England: FA Carling Premiership results (first week)

Arsenal (2) vs Nottingham Forest (1)
Blackburn Rovers (0) vs Derby (0)
Coventry City (2) vs Chelsea (1)
Everton (0) vs Aston Villa (0)
Liverpool (2) vs Southampton (1)

http://s

THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies!

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Email us at Star@NETS.com.Jo or start @go.com.jo with your news and views.

Watch digital TV channels, surf the net, and exchange audio/video data through one unit:

TV set-top boxes with everything!

THE CONCEPT of 'Set-top boxes' with everything has been causing quite a stir in the electronics industry over the past few years.

As this trend begins to manifest in pioneering products, such as the Siemens Nixdorf Multimedia Integration Box, its worth taking a look at this impressive convergence of technologies, which should produce an all-in-one entertainment system we could be seeing a lot more of in the next year or two.

The whole idea is to fuse a digital video decoder, with a high speed Internet protocol, some HTML and Java components, along with a PowerTV operating system, all based on a Sun 'Microspare' processor.

So, basically, this box that sits on top of your TV should enable you to surf the Internet, watch your favorite cable (digitally decoded) channel, and send/receive information whether in audio or video format. In other words it's a 'magic' box, that will replace your PC, your cable/digital decoder and serve as the basis for inter-home communications.

The Multimedia Integration Box from Siemens Nixdorf allows users, for the first time, to combine standard analog TV sets with industry-standard NetPC technology, providing utilization of a whole range of interactive and digital services

in the comfort of their home through one unit.

The key word here is 'interactivity.' How much do people need it? Would they rather have interactive TV, which



enables them to select or customize the programs they receive through their TV channels.

Will home viewers of TV channels like to navigate the Web, during commercial breaks, of their favorite TV programs and then quickly switch back to their TV viewing?

All these questions, and more, are being very carefully studied by researchers. Studies show that, by the year 2002, over 14.7 million homes in North America will be equipped with Internet-enabled TVs.

Surveys have shown that people who value the 'entertainment content' of the Inter-

net would rather access it with the same ease and relaxation of browsing through TV channels, while seated on a sofa. This means that 'channeling' the Internet through the typical TV set, is better received by users than turning PCs into TVs.

To make this idea simpler, consider the following: If you had a PC equipped with a TV card, would you sit at your computer desk for over an hour and a half watching a TV movie? Probably not. This logic suggests that the Internet has to be brought to the TV, rather than the PC expanding into a TV and home entertainment system.

Of course, there are some technical boundaries that need to be crossed.

Hooking up to the Internet through a telephone line has its limitations, especially if millions of people, sitting in front of their TVs suddenly decide to log-in. The solution is delivering the Internet through satellite, benefiting from the very wide bandwidth offered which should be able to handle a high capacity of users. Still, this aspect and others are to be worked out.

Getting back to the Siemens Nixdorf's new Multimedia Integration Box, it supports a wide range of applications, including electronic commerce, video on demand, standard video telephony, video conferencing, inter-

active games, telefax, email and multimedia mail, digital TV encoding, radio, business TV, audio, video and pay TV.

The whole spectrum of information can be carried into your home through these revolutionary set-top boxes.

It remains to be seen how standards will be developed, and agreed upon by the major suppliers and manufacturers.

Only then, it may become commonplace, to find an impressive set-top box in the traditionally 'cable' home.

Cairo to host GITEX in April 1999

THE DUBAI World Trade Centre (DWTC) has announced that the Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX)—the largest annual information technology event in the Middle East and one of the most significant information technology exhibitions in the world—will take place in Egypt under the name of Gitex Cairo, between 2 and 5 April, 1999.

Gitex Cairo—held in addition to Gitex Dubai, which usually takes place in the last quarter of the year—is the first Gitex event to be organized outside Dubai.

The DWTC will be organizing the Cairo exhibition, benefiting from its 20-year experience in this field. The Cairo event, which will be held with the support and cooperation of a number of Egyptian associations involved in the Information Technology sector, is expected to become an important information technology exhibition for the Levant and North Africa regions.

Mohammed Ali Al Abbar, Director General of the Dubai Economic Development

Department and Vice-Chairman of the DWTC, said that in the past two decades, Gitex had established itself as the biggest event of its kind in the Middle East. The selection of Cairo as the venue for the international onset of Gitex outside the UAE came as part of a long-term strategy to establish an international exhibitions industry in Dubai on the one hand, and to make use of the economic developments in the Egyptian market on the other.

Mr Al Abbar added that the move will complement privatization projects in Egypt leading to the opening of new commercial horizons for Arab and Gulf investors.

Gitex, which is entering its 18th year, had succeeded in attracting leading international computer companies to the Arab region. It has also contributed to the spread of knowledge of the importance of information technology, and its vital role in the future social and economic development. Mr Al Abbar pointed out that organizing Gitex in Egypt will support Egypt's Arab computer programming industry, and will

open new markets for this industry within and outside the Arab world.

The Egyptian market is regarded as the second largest information technology market—with the most rapid growth rates in the Arab World after Saudi Arabia. It is expected to secure a distinguished position on the international map of the world's most significant centres for developing programs and applications.

Gitex Cairo will feature the latest in hardware computer products, system hardware, software solutions, desktop publishing, office automation, multimedia, multilingual applications, networking and business communication, on-line information services, mobile computing, power systems, office systems, mainframe and storage technology. It will also feature office technology products and accessories, peripherals, personal computers/net PCs, financial and money handling hardware/software, Internet products, browsers web servers and web mastering products.

News update

iMac is here

Apple has launched the iMac, its latest Macintosh which is aimed at the home market. The iMac is attractive and not expensive.

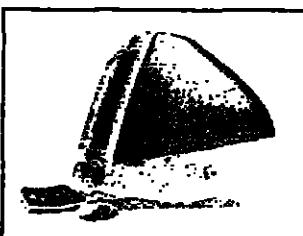
Even prior to its launch, the iMac caused a sweeping mania, with massive media coverage and huge user anticipation. It comes with built in Internet capabilities, and is DVD-ready (Digital Video—the new stan-

dard in the video film industry). For information on when the iMac will be available in Jordan, contact IPS on telephone 5827611 or Ideal Systems on 5930123.

'Sound Blaster Inside' ● If you've been wondering what the SoundBlaster badges on many new PC units mean, then you'll be pleased to know that Creative Labs—the makers of the Sound Blaster and multimedia accessories—have created a 'quality assurance badge' to ensure that buyers are receiving the original SoundBlaster and accessories as they had ordered. With its advanced sound cards, especially the AWE 64, Creative

Labs continue to chart the way in the industry. The badge is along the lines of the 'Intel Inside' logo. It is proof that every component of the modern PC is equally important.

Suits for sale, on-line ● Daoud Tycoon's, the well-known men's-wear chain in Jordan, have set up a Web site which represents a pioneering move to sell men's suits on-line in the country! The site is developed by Computer Networking Services (Primus). Check it out at address: www.cns.com.jo/Daoud.



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INTERFACE BY ZEID NASSER

'Forced upgrading,' in the World of Word

IF YOU have been a PC user for over five years, then you will have probably upgraded your version of Microsoft Word a number of times already. You probably moved from Word 2.0, to Word 6.0, then to Word 7.0 and possibly to Word 8.0.

Some of us, however, haven't made the move, simply because we are comfortable with our current version of Word, and because it is somewhat intimidating to install a word processor that is becoming almost as large as a complex engineering application!

The newer versions of Word come on far too many diskettes and once installed, you soon realize that you'll only use about 15% of the features available to you!

Even installing it from CD-ROM, you can't help but feel amazed at how much hard disk space it gobbles up. For those who used Word Perfect throughout the eighties and early nineties, it must be shocking that a word processing application, which should by its nature be simple, now offers so much. In fact, too much. What would people who used WordStar think. Remember, these were the 'cult' word processing applications for a very long time, and they always maintained user-friendliness through simplicity.

Now, putting this whole line of argument aside, what is absolutely appalling is the fact that Microsoft Word does not offer decent compatibility for those who stuck to their older versions. For example, a file created on Word 6.0—no matter how simple—cannot be opened on Word 2.0. Assuming that the technical jump from Word 2.0 to 6.0 was huge, this could be justified, but how can they justify all the problems and errors that occur when you try to open a Word 7.0 file on Word 6.0?

This is too much. It is like forcing us all to upgrade, by buying Microsoft's latest software. The problem is that you will have to upgrade your Word version for reasons related to practicality. If you exchange files with friends or colleagues, then one of them is bound to be a user of a newer version of Word. So, you will have to follow suit to read the files sent to you.

It really makes you wonder, if we are playing according to a grand plan, set for us in Redmond, Washington—the new headquarters for the modern, computer-run world.

I for one, have resisted the pressures of upgrading, insisting that friends deliver files to me in text format (with the suffix .txt). That way, I can open them on my trusty, reliable and reasonably uncomplicated version of Word 2.0.

Although this may sound strange, coming from an information technology writer: I am a user, first and foremost. Surely, tens of thousands of users worldwide feel the same about the 'forced upgrade' policy that we are being subjected to.

To be fair, the Arabic version of Word 6.0 includes an Arabic spell checker, not found in previous versions, which is a reasonable cause for upgrading; but the additional features in following versions have not been as dramatic!

Of course, this whole issue is not unique to Word. Many applications are similar, in the way requiring a commitment towards upgrades and getting larger and more complicated.

Maybe it's just the price of progress. For most new entrants into the world of computing, this seems perfectly normal, and hardly a bother. As for the rest of us, we cherish the days a word processor used to fit on a single diskette or maybe two. Back then—not so long ago—the world of computing was exciting, full of promise and characterized by backward and forward compatibility; which respected the needs of all users—both those who bought the new software upgrades and those who stuck to the old software. We need to see more of that spirit today.

Destinations

The information technology provider

DESTINATIONS, IS the preferred English name for Al Mutajjehat Co.—it is not a literal translation of the Arabic name, but this is the name you will find printed on all the company's stationery and documentation.

With the overwhelming response and reaction to its launch campaign, Destinations reciprocated by assuring the business and end users that their expectations would be fulfilled, and the long awaited-for quality service would be delivered.

The newspaper team met with Mr. Sami Jara, the General Manager, who provided the team with insight into the company's philosophy, explaining the objectives of the company. The publicly announced mission statement provides the best summary of these objectives. The company's official mission statement reads as follows:

Destinations, a specialist in Information Technology (IT), promotes high standard and quality services to the public and private sector.

Destinations is committed to contribute positively to the education system by expanding the horizon and facilitating more effective ways and methods of learning and research.

Destinations will utilize the Internet resources to help the people of Jordan to reach international financial and employment opportunities.

Destinations made it clear that goals asserted in the mission statement will not be compromised, and excelling in the high quality service, will provide the competitive edge in the market. It was clear through the meeting that Destinations' ambitions and goals reach beyond the offering of basic Internet services.

Destinations' marketing man-



ager, explained the various packages offered in the Zone-1 category. In addition to the leased line services, web hosting, name service, and home page design, a more fundamental shift from regular Internet Service Providers (ISP's) was evident. Destinations will utilize the Internet as the infrastructure to implement Data Warehousing solutions and robust busi-

ness, financial, and industrial world-class application. Relevant information to these applications will be made available at the right time.

The system analyst talked about the short term as well as the long term plans for the company. To guarantee high service quality, state of the art solutions, equipment, and technology, has been implemented to provide the highest possible throughput and minimum down time. A pre-planned expansion and phased upgrade plan is in place, to cope with the projected increase in demand on the services. Destinations will lead the pack in offering and implementing new technologies, as they become available at affordable cost such as ISDN, V-SAT, and other technologies.

Destinations' mission statement, falls in line with His Majesty King Hussein's guidelines.

Destinations vision of the future is very positive. According to Mr Sami Jara, both official and semi-official, and government agencies did not spare any effort to facilitate the progress, and to help the company to overcome all obstacles and difficulties, in getting on line.

Destinations, has reciprocated to all this generosity with its free e-mail package to the students, and the free posting of any individual's employment seeking CV on the Internet, at no charge.

BUSINESSMAN'S GUIDE

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"The Baby Dance"



Jodie Foster poses with actress Stockard Channing as they arrive for the premier of the new film "The Baby Dance," 17 August in Beverly Hills. Foster is the executive producer of the film through her company, Egg Pictures Production. Channing portrays a lady trying for years to have a baby, to no avail, in the story of two desperate families, who come together in the emotional struggle with life and each other.

Rewers

Record executive turns filmmaker in the name of children

By Robert W. Welkos

HOLLYWOOD—Michele was only 5 when Daphna Edwards first laid eyes on her at a homeless shelter. Edwards, who founded the punk rock label Unicorn Records, had come to the Santa Monica, Calif., shelter to organize a choir for a Thanksgiving Day benefit when she noticed children throwing stones at the little girl because she hadn't been toilet trained. Edwards received permission to take the girl home, clean her up and dress her in new clothes.

On ensuing weekends, the Beverly Hills woman would return to the shelter to spend time with Michele, but noticed that the little girl was black-and-blue from injuries received from her drug-addicted biological mother.

Five years have passed and today Michele, who is 10, has been legally adopted by Edwards and her husband, real estate businessman Richard Ziman. The couple also have a 4-year-old daughter who was adopted through traditional channels.

Now, as part of her crusade on behalf of abused and neglected children, Edwards has written, directed and co-produced a movie called "Footsteps," a romantic thriller that calls attention to the plight of these children—and the ramifications for society.

The film was screened earlier this summer at a "Love Our Children" benefit held at the Directors Guild of America. It was introduced by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has become a vocal supporter of Edwards' cause.

The film is being entered at film festivals in Toronto, Venice and New York and, Edwards said, the White House also plans to screen the film for the president and members of Congress, when their schedules allow.

"Footsteps" tells the story of a TV journalist who, while investigating a high-profile murder, uncovers a complicated case of child abuse.

The film, co-produced by Ami Arzi, stars Karina Lombard, who appeared in "Legends of the Fall" with Brad Pitt and had a memorable scene with Tom Cruise on the beach in "The Firm"; Maria Conchita Alonso, whom independent filmmakers nominated for best actress in "Caught"; Damian Chapa, who portrayed Lyle Menendez in "Menendez: A Killing in Beverly Hills"; and comedian Sandra Bernhard.



Footsteps: Daphna Edwards, who founded the punk rock label Unicorn Records, is lobbying Congress to protect children from abusive parents. Photo by Iris Schneider.

The production cost \$1.5 million, but was helped by four dozen sponsors ranging from Kodak, which donated the film, to Revlon (makeup) and even such fashion houses as Christian Dior and Valentino (costumes). "We didn't have to pay one dime for the entire wardrobe," Edwards said.

Edwards also received support from her friends in the music business. The soundtrack features five songs from Dead Can Dance, two from Marika and others from Amelia Spicer,

Alonso and Lombard.

During filming, Edwards recalled, various cast and crew members would approach her and mention that they, too, had experienced abuse while growing up. "It was a very difficult movie to make because of the hurt and anguish," she said.

But it is Edwards' own story that bears telling.

After seeing that Michele had been abused, Edwards went to court in hopes of getting Michele's mother into drug rehab so that she could look

after Michele properly.

"At that point, I thought there was hope, if she just got cleaned up," Edwards said. "I thought perhaps if her mother stopped doing drugs, she and Michele could have a better life together. At the same time, I was trying to get her into job training."

Edwards quickly discovered, however, that non-parents have no rights in children's court. "The judge wouldn't even listen to me," she said.

Edwards discovered that the way the law is now written, biological parents have reunification rights with their children even if there is a history of abuse.

"At that point, I took her with me, went to Washington and pushed myself on (Sen.) Ted Kennedy's steps," Edwards said. "That's when the battle started."

Edwards met with lawmakers, lobbying for changes in the Family Preservation Act.

"The Family Preservation Act was installed by (then-President) Reagan during the time when he believed naively but sweetly—it's all about keeping the American family together," Edwards said. "However, part of that law includes a reunification clause, which allows biological parents to be reunited with their own abused children, even if they were severely and permanently abused. We have not been able to change it for a long, long time."

Edwards explained that these children are either returned to their abusive parents or are passed around from one foster home to the next.

Edwards wants Congress to add one line to the law that would permit biological parents to reunite with their children "as long as it's in the best interests of the child."

In the end, Michele's biological mother voluntarily gave up parental rights to her daughter, Edwards said.

Initially, I tried to help her and get her into drug clinics," Edwards said.

"Unfortunately, the mother was born in a homeless mission. In the final court hearing, she said, 'Why didn't I have someone help me when I was a little girl?' I'm in communication with her. They found out she is a manic-depressive. I helped her get into (low-income) housing. She's lost four children to the system."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

The Choueifat/SABIS® School Network:

Over 14,000 Students, in 19 Schools, on 4 Continents

The 3rd Annual Directors' Meeting

The third annual meeting of the Directors of the Choueifat/SABIS® School Network was held recently, for the first time, in the Middle East. Co-chaired by the Network's President Leila Charles Saad and Director General Ralph Bustani, the weeklong meeting aimed at reviewing the past academic year, planning future strategies and restating the Choueifat/SABIS® philosophy within the network.



One of the oldest existing pictures of the staff and students at the Mother School taken around 1895

ful include specific teaching methods, a prescribed curriculum, a sophisticated computerized Academic Monitoring System (AMS), and a well-structured management set-up.

MARKS OF DISTINCTION

The Choueifat/Sabis Educational System has unique features that form graduates equipped for a successful academic and personal life. It applies a non-selective admissions policy. Typically, the easy

way of achieving good results is through selectivity in the admission and retention of students. Choueifat/SABIS® has opted against this approach and without being selective, its member schools achieve outstanding results. Choueifat/SABIS® has its own Academic Development Department. This Department writes books in a number of disciplines and is responsible for continually updating



At work during the Choueifat/SABIS® third annual Directors' meeting

MARKS OF ACHIEVEMENT

The Choueifat/SABIS® track record has enabled this institution, which was established in 1886 in Lebanon, to compete and succeed in the competitive USA market. It is impressive to learn that Choueifat/SABIS® has been awarded the management of charter schools (publicly funded but privately run) in the United States. Today, it is already running five charter

schools in Chicago and Massachusetts and has contracts to run six more. In an article on a study conducted by the state of Massachusetts comparing the results of the different charter schools in Massachusetts, the *Boston Globe*

reported "the SABIS® School was cited for the most stunning performance."

The *Chicago Sun Times* had the following to add, "In one year, an international for-profit school chain transformed a below average school in Springfield, Massachusetts, into the most sought after school in the district."

Another major Choueifat/SABIS® success story occurred in Frankfurt, Germany.

When Frankfurt was chosen as the site of the European Central Bank, the Chamber of Commerce, the city of Frankfurt and the state of Hessen—with a group of leading industrial and business firms—initiated a drive to build an international school. The group included giants such as I.T.T., Opel, Deutsche Bank, McCain-Erickson, and Procter & Gamble. After two long and thorough searches, the Choueifat/SABIS® system was chosen on two separate occasions by two separate committees. The Choueifat/SABIS® international school in Frankfurt begins its third academic year this year. New custom-built premises will provide state-of-the-art educational and cultural facilities of a standard probably unequaled in Europe.

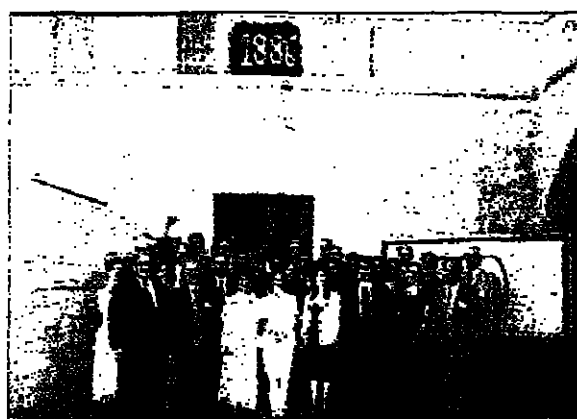
LOOKING AHEAD:

The Choueifat/SABIS® Network's academic and non-academic goals make it

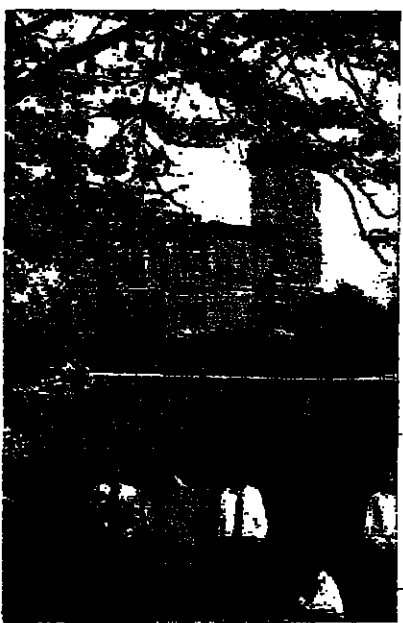


Site plan of the International School of Choueifat, Amman, Jordan

a provider of top-quality education. The combination of retaining the valuable from the past and embracing new technologies and methods ensure that the Choueifat/SABIS® Network will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of countless students in the 21st century, the third century of its existence, since its inception in Lebanon in 1886.



At the founding school of the Choueifat/SABIS® network in 1998. In back center, SABIS® president Leila Charles Saad. On her left, SABIS® managing director Ralph Bustani together with SABIS® senior management from all schools.



The International School of Choueifat, Bath, UK



Video conferencing at SABIS®